CAN I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER?

LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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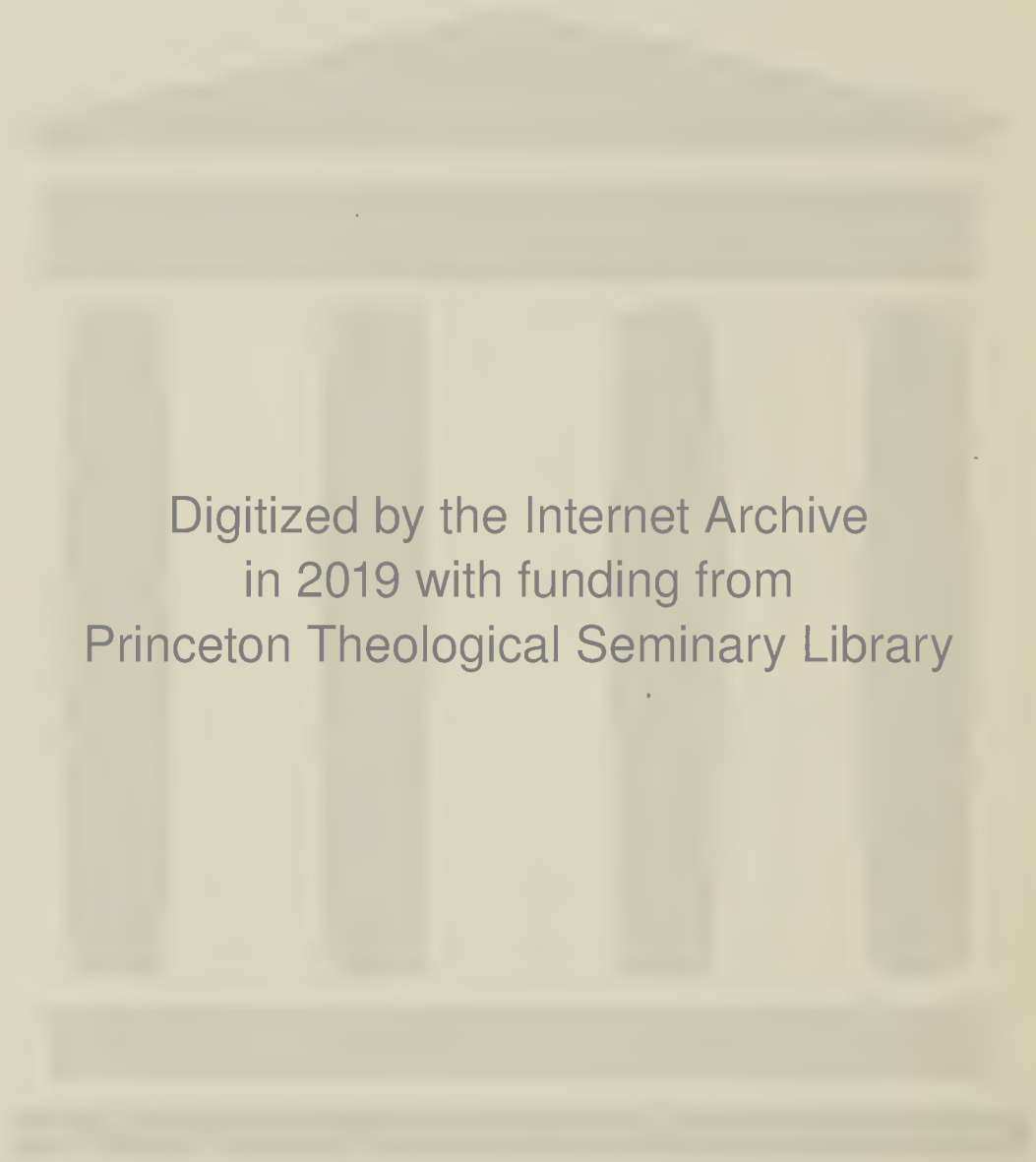
TO

My Eager Fellow-Students,

THE MEMBERS OF

THE FIRST HARVARD SUMMER SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY.



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I

THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE BEING OF GOD

I SUPPOSE that every one here present knows something about the difficulty of believing in God. It is easy to say "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," and to say it sincerely, and a genuine confidence in such a God may be the usual practice and attitude of our life; nevertheless, the fact remains that to attain and preserve a vital and soul-satisfying belief in the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the all-embracing mind and the all-embracing heart, — to maintain a confidence in him that is worthy of a perfect God on the one

hand and an immortal human spirit on the other, — this is an act and practice that demands our human best and utmost, and is beset with difficulties deep and high. Who will say that he is habitually satisfied with his own belief in God?

If a full and fair census of difficulties could be taken in this present company, it is likely that we should find the whole field represented. I cannot go through the list, or do more than recall the variety and seriousness of the questions that are involved. We should find, in the minds that are here, the old and well-recited arguments for the being of God, — the cosmological, the teleological, the anthropological, the ontological, and whatever others there may be, — and we should find cordial recognition of their strength so far as they go, and profound sense of their limitations and imperfectness. We should find the feeling that no one of them is absolutely beyond reproach, and that, taken

all together, they may not make a complete and always convincing proof. We should find the lurking doubt whether any argument or group of arguments can ever suffice to establish immovably so vast a conclusion as we are seeking to validate. And thus, after a survey of the known field and range of deliberate and formal proofs, we should find intelligent minds still reaching out for something more, feeling that something more must be attainable, and longing for firm hold upon that certainty which lies beyond the field of proving.

In the minds that are gathered here we should also find full catalogue of the practical and moral difficulties in the way of belief in God. To believe in God if we could see him as he is, or as we conceive him to be when we rise to the thought of perfect wisdom and perfect love, this would be as easy as believing in the sunlight on a summer morning; but

to believe in God in such a world as this! I need not try to recall the forms in which this ancient difficulty has been encountered by the minds that are now attending to my words. In a world of storms and shipwrecks and impartial death, in a world of losses and disappointments and the irony of fate, in a world of crowding and cruelty and the survival of the fittest, we are asked to believe in God. In a world of sin and shame, — of war and bloodshed, of fraud and dishonesty, of impurity and greed, of waste and want, of pride and jealousy and revenge, — we are asked to believe in God. We have met the problem in our personal lives with their dark mysteries, and in our outlook upon the large and sad affairs of humanity, and in the memories that are here we should find full store of questionings whether it was possible really to believe in God in such a world as this.

In the presence of both these classes of

difficulties, the theoretical and the practical, we have been told that we have need of faith, the strong springing of the spirit up into a higher realm, the bold resorting of the human to the divine. In the minds here present, the difficulties of faith are well known. Is there any one there for us to fly to? If there is a good Being there, unseen, it is only by the free upspringing of a heart in fellowship with him in goodness that we can find ourselves at rest in him. Are we good enough to believe in a good God? How are we to obtain the moral vigor, the elasticity and spring of spirit, to become sure that there is a congenial and fatherly goodness for us to find and repose upon? In our census of difficulties, we certainly should find in many of our own souls the desolating consciousness that we are not good enough to believe in God. And with all the rest, there comes now and then to us, as a check upon faith, the

voice of hard uniformity, the report of unpoetical and unaspiring science, suggesting that even as God is nowhere found by searching, so there is no need of him, since all is going smoothly whether he is known or not. With such a counter-summons, what wonder that our faith does not always rise at the call of the divine, and that we can find among our memories the shuddering thought, "What if, after all, there should prove to be nothing in it? What if the sight of our eyes were showing us all there is?"

I am not saying that these are bars to belief in God. They are not final or fatal difficulties, for they have been overcome, and can be overcome again. I believe in God, or I should not be here speaking of him; and yet I know the meaning of all these difficulties that I have hinted at, and am well convinced that my auditors know them as thoroughly as I. Such difficulties do beset

the common mind of man, and they are so great that the way of clear and satisfactory belief in God is by no means a plain path. It might seem easier if the difficulties were found in the philosopher's country, where trained minds might grapple with them in solitude, while the common man went free. But the distinction between philosophical problems and practical every-day difficulties does not hold here. Philosophical uncertainties about God emerge in their effect upon Christian faith and common living, and the grounds of doubt that are influential in the house and the shop, by the grave-side and in the ruins, are among those that trouble the philosophers also. Philosophers are common men here, and common men are philosophers. The question of the being of God is not exclusively, or chiefly, a question of the schools: it is a question of the world. All men have to do with it, and all have means of know-

ing that the clear solution lies above and beyond our ordinary range of life, where it can be reached only through strenuous exertion of our highest powers.

What shall we do? How shall we advise the common man who desires to believe in God? This is the same as to ask how we shall advise ourselves; for we are all common men, dealing with the common question. What shall a man do, who stands unsatisfied with the customary arguments, perplexed by the mystery of life, unable to rise to a satisfying faith, and uncertain whether the words of belief that he longs to utter are words of truth? How shall such a man approach his question, with rational hope of becoming able to say with all his heart and all his mind, "I believe in God the Father"?

I propose that such a man test the contrary. Try the opposite position, and see

how it works. What if there absolutely is no God? There are difficulties, as we well know, in believing in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. They sometimes seem so great that it would appear easier to take the other side, and disbelieve in God. But it would seem reasonable to inquire what difficulties there are in doing that. It is fair to assume that any conclusion or conviction in so high and mysterious a region will have its difficulties, but it is well to judge them in advance as far as we can, and see whether, in accepting a new conclusion, we shall be freeing ourselves from perplexity or not. Test the contrary. I find it hard to believe in God with a full and satisfactory belief: where, then, shall I find myself, if I give over the attempt and adapt myself to the conclusion that God cannot be believed in? If this is really the easier position to hold, we wish to know it; but if we were to find ourselves

in a land of contradictions, inaptitudes, and impossibilities that could not sustain the life of mind or of heart, it would be greatly to our advantage if a glimpse into that land could be given to us before we really entered it. As a common man, therefore, bringing the common questions, I wish to inquire where I am, and what I am, if I am not to believe in God. I am driven before my difficulties, out of what I thought was God's country, and I go as I am driven. Where am I now? Do not blame me for saying the things that I must now say, for I shall not be talking foolishness. I must plunge at once into a world where God is not, and report what I find there. And do not plead against me that absolute atheists are very rare, — so rare, in fact, that it is hardly worth while to consider their arguments. I am not proposing to dispute with an absolute atheist, or indeed to dispute at all. I am considering my own questions, and those

of my hearers in this room. If we yield to our every-day difficulties about the divine intelligence and goodness, and consent to the denial that they suggest, we shall move into the country of absolute atheism, even though we prove to be the first that ever entered it. Either we are to believe in God, or we are not; and I am simply proposing that we test the negative, and see whether it affords us rest from our mental and moral perplexities.

If there is no God, there is no mind where we have been accustomed to look for God. When I yield to my difficulties in believing in God, I surrender my right to hold that the universe, as I have been wont to call it, is a work of mind. If I find a mind, I find a God, and I am now shut out from finding a God. I live therefore in a mindless world. It has never been willed to be such as it is, and it has never been embraced in thought. It has

not become what it is by any exercise of rational powers. It is not an intellectual system, but is inexpressive of mental processes and meanings. I have often found it hard to say that the universe with all its diverse elements is the expression of a mind, and therefore I now declare, whether sadly or joyfully does not matter, that it is not. I follow my doubts, and say there is no God, and understand myself to be saying that there is no mind in the world. It is a point on which I cannot compromise: yes and no are the only answers to the question, and my doubts have driven me to the no.

Then of course I shall find no mind expressed in things about me, and shall hear no living voice from above me and beyond. It is no news to any of us that if there is no God there will be nothing to bear the name of revelation. Of course all that men have called by that inspiring name will disappear from the plane of reality,

and nothing that can be called revelation will ever be known again. There is no one to be revealed; and if I hunger and thirst for knowledge of unseen things, there is no one to offer it to me. This is too old a story to need more than a passing mention now. But the companion-fact to this is not so familiar in the common thought. If I follow my doubts, and describe the observed universe in accordance with them, it is certain, as I said just now, that I shall find no mind expressed in things around me. If there is none, I can find none. If by any means it comes to pass that I think I do find traces of the work of mind in things around me, that will be only because I am unwittingly projecting my own powers into things that I observe, and finding there what I have first placed there by my own thinking. Any such process will be illegitimate, and can result only in misinterpretation and misconception. No imaginings of

mine will change the facts. A mindless world it is, being a godless world, and a mindless world I shall find it. No traces of mind shall I find in it, since none are there.

So I shall have no science. I can have none. I find myself in a world to which science is not normal; a world that does not yield itself to science or offer any material for it; a world in which there is nothing to make science of. I may as well speak the simple word that tells the truth: I live in a world where science is impossible. It is a world where science can never be possible.

I need not stay long to establish it. No God, no revelation, is a truism; but beside it stands the equally certain and unquestionable truth, no God, no science. Revelation and science stand on equal ground, for the two are essentially alike. Revelation implies that there is some Other than myself, unseen, who can and does make

himself known to me. Science implies that there is some mind other than myself, that has expressed itself in things that I observe, and expressed through them meanings that are fit material for apprehension by the human intellect. Science implies two intellects, — one weaving intellectual conceptions into the web of existence, and the other studying out the figure that is inwoven to the web; two intellects, one producing what the other can read and understand, and the other understanding what the first has produced.

I suppose it is plain that nothing but a mind can apprehend and appreciate the expressions of a mind. The utterances that I am making, being expressions of an intellect, would remain absolutely unabsorbed and unapprehended, if there were not other intellects here to which they made appeal. But it is equally plain and true that an intellect can apprehend and find meaning only in that which is the

expression of a mind, of its own intellectual nature and kindred. If the sounds that now traverse the air of this room did not convey expressions of powers akin to your own, they would be to you utterly unintelligible. The cries of our lower kindred among the animals are to us partly intelligible, and even impressive, but only as we hear in them the expression of some desires or passions that we are familiar with. We understand only where there is community. Rational powers, as we name them, apprehend only rational expressions. Only our own kindred can we understand. And so it becomes clear that in a world that is not the expression of mind there can be for us no science. Nothing can be understood, for nothing will have meaning. The one point of contact with our rational powers, by virtue of which we might form statements of meanings present in things that we observe, will be forever wanting. A mind-

less world is necessarily an unintelligible world, and therefore no world for science. Science makes its exit along with revelation, if we cannot believe in God.

It is a very serious matter to live in a world where no science is possible. I was just now asking where I find myself if I cannot believe in God, and it seems that I find myself in a mindless world, where I can have no science. I do not see how I can be at home in such a world, and at any rate I must ask another question. What am I, if I cannot believe in God? What am I, indeed? I have been accustomed to say that I am a spirit, or that I have a mind, or that I am a rational being, — describing myself under all these names, and perhaps more, as one who possesses powers of understanding and affection and spiritual activity. I have a right to describe myself thus, for these powers are certainly an inalienable part of

myself. Whatever I may conclude about the existence of a spirit greater than I, these powers belong to me, and my possession of them is not less real, whether I believe in God or not. But my own being, though not altered in itself, is relatively altered in a most surprising way, by my ceasing to have a God. I now stand forth as the greatest mind in existence, — or rather, as a fair sample of the class of greatest existing minds. Other individual men may have larger powers than I, or they may not; in either case there exists no mind, either within my knowledge or beyond it, essentially superior to mine in the nature of its powers and its relation to existing things. If I know no God, I know no mind superior to the human mind, and so no mind essentially above my own. Human thought is the highest thought, and human knowledge the completest knowledge, that there is. Nothing more than men know has ever

been known anywhere. Whether other worlds exist, peopled by minds superior to ours, matters nothing here; for if they do exist they are essentially like us in the nature and limitations of this knowledge, though superior. The fact remains, that if I know no God, my mind stands forth as a sample of the highest type of mind in existence.

A high rank this would seem to give to man. There is none above him. Yes, but see what it brings with it. No thought in existence larger than mine: then there is no comprehensive thought. My knowledge grows, and is dependent upon growth and upon the passage of time. I know a little about certain fragments of the past, I know a little of things that are at present, I know nothing of the future. My own career, as a whole, I have never grasped in thought, and can never grasp. I can form no synthesis, save by guesswork, even of this hour and the next.

There is no man living who can combine this hour and the next hour in his knowledge. But this is now the largest knowledge that exists. My life as a whole has never been present in thought to any mind, and will never be. No single thing that exists will ever be understood, in the sense of being truly known in all its relations; for neither I nor any other man can ever fully know all the qualities and relations of anything whatever. No larger knowledge than this! Nothing has ever been thought through, nothing has ever been fully known. All is moving on uncomprehended. The world itself has never been embraced in any thought, or held present as a whole to any observation or any conceiving power. The universe is no more known than I know it, save as a few of my brothers have gathered more information about it than I possess. All knowledge is knowledge of results, obtained by observation; knowledge of causes, if there

are such things, is all merely inferential, never and nowhere original and certain. Man is at the summit if there is no God: yes, but what a summit! No all-embracing mind, no well-balanced understanding, no comprehensive knowledge, no knowledge higher and larger than that human ignorance that we are so profoundly conscious of! Nothing broader than our narrowness, or deeper than our little depth! When I think of it, I most ardently hope that the summit may be found higher than I, or any of my kind.

But what if my hope fails, and I am compelled to live in such a world as I have been picturing? A further question will confront me, and I cannot turn away from it. It is a question of life and death, too, for all my thinking. Can I trust my powers? The powers of a thinking being I certainly possess. No one knew that I would possess them, but some-

how I do. By some unexplained and inexplicable process I have come to have them, and there are none essentially higher anywhere. Standing in the front rank might seem to imply the trustworthiness of these powers of mine; but does it, or does it not? Can I trust my powers?

The trouble about trusting my powers in a world without God is very easily stated. My powers stand alone. The powers of all my human brothers are just like mine, and I have nothing with which to compare my powers, except others of the same order. The human has nothing to compare itself with, for, since I cannot believe in God, there is no mind higher than the human. A dog, if he came to a human-like consciousness and self-estimate, might compare his reasoning with that of his master, so far as he could understand it, and thus learn to judge himself. But my thinking stands by itself, with no higher thought in existence. I am like a dog in a manless

world; and how shall I learn anything about larger and more trustworthy mental action? If there were about me a world of order, offspring of an intelligent mind, with its far-reaching illustration of intellectual operations, such a world would serve as a support to my intelligence, a confirmation to my instinctive confidence in my own thinking, and a proof of the validity of my normal intellectual powers and processes. If there were a larger mind than mine putting forth similar activity, doing in the large what I do in the small, giving evidence that it possessed in full what I possess in rudiments, plainly such a mind would stand in comparison with my own, and I could learn to estimate the value of my own processes in the light of larger processes. The vaster the scope of such a mind, and the larger and more various its operations, the surer would become the basis for an estimate of what rationality is, and what my own rationality is worth.

But as it is, what have I to go by, in judging the validity of my own mental processes? Indeed, what do I mean by validity of mental processes? There are no mental processes, except in such limited minds as my own, and there exists absolutely no outside standard by which I, or all men together, can test the correctness of human thinking. How can I be sure that it is trustworthy?

This sad sense of uncertainty is deepened by what I know of the status of the mental operation in mankind. That status is one of incompleteness. Thinking is an art that needs to be learned, and an art that humanity has imagined itself to be learning. At any rate, mankind has apparently begun to learn the use of intellectual powers, but has thus far learned it only in part. My own thinking is youthful, tentative, almost childish: I go on from year to year, correcting not only my conclusions but my methods, taking on

what I feel to be better and more trustworthy ways of mental work. But what right have I to feel that they are better? I am only a beginner in intellectual action, at the best, and all men are like me in this, even though they may be more advanced beginners than I, and we are all beginners without a teacher, groping our way through the unknown field of mental operation, with no tests or means of comparison. What we call better may be worse, — if there be any worse or better. What we fancy to be growth may be decline. When we feel a fine glow of certainty, our powers are so childish and our methods so improvable that, for aught we know, we may be enjoying merely the intoxication of self-confidence and the delight of a pleasing error. Without guide and without maturity, how shall we be sure that our thinking is worthy to be trusted?

And even deeper than this the question

goes. As for the very process itself that we call rational, and the quality in ourselves to which we give that name, — what are we to think of this quality and this process? Here is a race of beings to which this quality and process seem normal. But, by hypothesis, they stand utterly alone and unsupported in this striking peculiarity. No larger rationality than theirs exists, and the world around them, however it may have come into being, bears no traces of rational operation, and is not the product of a rational mind. Here we stand thinking, all by ourselves, with nothing to bear us company. How shall we know that there is any real meaning or validity at all in this process which we call rational? The world exists without it. All the age-long operations of the universe go on without it. How do I know that this whole method and work that I call rational, is not a mere freak of life, a passing and

non-significant development, as transient and unimportant as it is solitary and unsupported? Nay, rather, it looks to me as if the rational process, thus unsupported and alone, could be nothing else than a passing freak of mindless operation. I certainly cannot be sure that it is more than this, and while such uncertainty lasts, I must not allow myself to trust my rational processes, as if they possessed a genuine validity. My powers may in every act be misleading me, my thinking is a will o' the wisp, and life is false. There is a noble phrase that I am very fond of, — "an honest world." But that phrase, and the idea that it expresses, and the whole range of conceptions to which it belongs, can have no existence if we are forbidden by the facts to believe in God. In that case our powers delude us and lead us into ways where there is no valid and trustworthy action possible, and the whole order of things amid which we stand is

really no order at all, but a strange, misleading group of accidents, false in their testimony and untrustworthy in their nature.

If we were compelled to live even for a little while, in such a world as I have been speaking of, we should come back with unspeakable joy, if the way of return were opened, into the good old world of science, with its warm and fruitful soil of intelligibility, bearing witness to the presence of the rich subsoil of mind. The world of science is the world that can be understood: that is its great and abiding peculiarity. That unintelligible world of which I have just been speaking is not the world in which we live. We firmly believe that the things around us will give clear and true answer to our inquiry as to their nature and significance. That things around us have an intelligible nature and a real significance, — that existing things

have real meanings, — this is the first assumption of science. It is an assumption that science has never been challenged by any fact to abandon; rather has it been confirmed by every new discovery and every fresh experiment. The one great fact that modern science has taught us is, that the universe is infinitely richer in meaning than we had ever imagined. Materialism in the philosophy of existence is dead and gone. Brute force and dead matter are no longer spoken of, and the physical universe is suspected to be even more truly a psychical universe. Meaning is everywhere. But meaning and mind are inseparable. Thought is the product of a thinker. A system impressed throughout with intelligible meanings is the work of a mind that means. Perhaps I seemed a little while ago to be wasting time when I talked of a world in which there could be no science, for there is no such world. We know full well that there is no such

world. All worlds would make good homes for science, for all worlds can be understood. The universal method is essentially intelligible; the universal method is therefore the expression of mind, and of mind similar to our own. The good old world of science does have the warm and fertile soil of intelligibility, and the rich subsoil of mind does underlie it. We men are not the only thinkers in existence: there is a vaster mind. Science is our witness that the universe has been embraced in a single thought. It is one, and not a mass of fragments. It has been thought through, and the relation of each part of it to the other parts has been thought of. And so we live amidst rational operation, and there is something with which to compare our mental processes. We can judge of the validity of our reasoning. Our minds and their processes are supported by the universal mind. We are rational in a rational universe,

seeking truth in an honest world, children thinking out the thoughts of the vast mind to which all things owe their intelligibility. The world is honest, and life is not a delusion.

So it appears that unless we hold to the universal mind, we are compelled to deny the possibility of science, the validity of our own mental processes, and the value of all in ourselves that we call rational. If the universe is mindless, mind in us is untrustworthy. But since the universe is intelligible, we may still our doubts about God, for atheism is impossible, and our doubts are destined to be permanently silenced by better knowledge of things as they are.

Yet this may seem too large a conclusion. Another vast question awaits us. Intelligible the universe doubtless is, on the intellectual side: science can see its way to exhaustive knowledge, if only

the necessary data could be obtained. But is the universe morally intelligible? There is a universal mind, but is there a universal heart? God is intelligence, but is God the perfect goodness? Intellectual doubts concerning God are, after all, minor doubts, and less tormenting than those moral doubts that darken all our sky when they sweep across. There is an all-comprehending mind, that gives to existence an intellectual unity: is there also an all-comprehending character of goodness, that gives to existence a moral unity? Belief that God is good is often found the hardest part of belief in God.

One true and helpful statement is waiting for us here, suggested by the field that we have just traversed. Science brings us a strong argument for the goodness of God. The existence of science, as we have seen, is evidence of the honesty of the world, and so of the straightforwardness and sincerity of the mind of which the world is

an expression. Our powers, as science shows us, are not misleading. The rational is the real. The universe is framed according to the principles that our rational nature acts upon and approves as good. The mind to which we are akin has placed us here amid the manifestations of itself, where our rationality will be supported by its larger rationality, and be able to find confirmation and training in the reasoned and reasonable world. Our mental powers have their counterparts, and what is normal to us proves to be characteristic of existence around us. All this is favorable to belief in God as good. Certainly it looks as if the mind that has given character to existing things were not only honest and trustworthy, but benignant and benevolent, gracious and kindly, worthy of our love and confidence.

But when we ask whether God is good, we shall do well to test the matter here

in the same manner as before. Try the opposite. See what comes if we deny it, and judge whether denial does not involve greater difficulties than it leads us to escape.

I think we may safely say that we have found the acknowledgment of a mind in the things around us to be unavoidable. Our question now is, whether this mind, whom we name God, is good. We need not insist upon close definition of this word "good," for in the large we all know well enough what it means. Is the great mind trustworthy and loveworthy? Does God possess those qualities which command the approval of the best human judgment and affection? Is all that is good in us akin to something greater and better in him?

What if not? Let me yield to my doubts concerning an eternal and perfect goodness, and be driven to the conviction that God is not good. What

then? Where am I, and what am I, now?

For one thing, I am in a world where there ought to be no religion. I do not know that I can say that I am in a world where there can be no religion, for no one knows what follies may spring up in an irrational place, even though men regard themselves as rational. But certainly in a world of rational men, where there is no God, there ought to be no religion. Religion would not be normal in such a world. It is not well that men should look up, if there is not some one above who is worthy to be looked up to. In that case religion is a delusion and a snare. It would be an unworthy exercise of high and noble powers. If there is no good Being, religion as religion is a mistake. It is not merely true that special forms of religion are degrading; it is true also that this entire department of human nature and life does not accord with real-

ity, since there is no worthy object for it to rest in, and man is not himself till he has shaken off the whole system and idea of religion, whether in its lowest forms or in its highest. Nay, in its highest forms it is more misleading and harmful than in its lowest, since here its affirmations are at once more noble and more false.

A world without God as mind is a world in which science is impossible. A world without God as goodness is a world in which religion is abnormal. To live in such a world I need not only to throw away all regard for science, but to still all voices of what I have been wont to call my religious nature. I must not worship, I must not pray, I must not aspire to a divine fellowship, I must not cry out for righteousness in the fierceness of hunger and thirst, I must not count upon manifestations of the divine goodness in my own soul or in the history of my kind. There is no divine righteousness, and there

is no divine fellowship. Let us face the consequences of our denial, for they will surely face us. Humanity is not adapted to religion, or religion to humanity. All religion is a mistake. Religion of every kind is as much out of place in a godless world as science is. No longer has either of the two the slightest standing in the court of reality.

If I find myself in a world where religion is utterly abnormal, it will not be long before I shall be asking what I am. I thought I had a religious nature; that is to say, I thought that religion was normal to me, and I could not be myself without it. I thought these unquestionably real and urgent religious elements in my life and that of mankind constituted a part of my proper being. They form a part of my actual being: there is no doubt of that; but it now appears that my actual being has nothing to correspond to it. It is exactly as if I had eyes in a world without

light, ears in a world of eternal silence, and smell in a world destitute of odors. It is as if I had reason in a world non-rational, and an artistic sense in a world in which beauty had never existed. Still farther, I have to deal with this enormous anomaly, that these powers that have no counterpart have somehow been brought into exercise. It is as if in a lightless world my eyes had not been useless, as if in a silent world I had been hearing sounds, as if in a world devoid of beauty my artistic sense had actually discovered beauty. For the life of religion has not been void and vain. The religious powers of man have found fruitful exercise, and have made their worthy and elevating contribution to the life of the race; and yet they tell us what is false, for there is absolutely no goodness above us. Passing by the question where these beneficent but false endowments came from, and how my nature came thus to bear witness to that

which has no existence, I come back to my first question, What am I? How can I answer it? for it is a hopeless puzzle. There are difficulties, in view of what goes on in this poor world, in believing in the goodness of God; but they do not go so deep as this difficulty about the nature and constitution of our own selves, which we meet if once we follow our doubts and deny that God is good.

But the difficulties are not all in the region that is commonly called religious. The ethical department of life is equally involved. I am following my doubts, and consenting to deny that God is good, just as I consented a little while ago to deny that God is intelligent. Then at once I encounter certain questions about this reality, not well definable but well understood in fact, which we call goodness. To deny that God has it is not to deny that it exists, and is not to get away from

the necessity of considering it. Such a thing as goodness does exist among men. We have our moral judgment, our moral standards, our practice and our theories explaining it, our right and wrong, our self-condemnation and self-approval. We admire moral purity, unselfishness, fidelity, and love. We know that goodness is real in the world. It is imperfect everywhere, but it is not a dream or a fancy, it is a solid trait of existing character in men. Mankind is evil enough, and prone enough to evil-doing; and yet goodness, partial but genuine, is as real in the world as badness, and forms the great common stock of social possibility, without which all our structures of society could not stand a day. Whether there is a good God or not, good men and women are known to us all, and all human beings have some good in them.

But, following my doubts, I stand in a world that has no good God in it or

above. All the goodness that anywhere exists is like my own. How much does it amount to? Many of my brothers in humanity may have attained to a higher degree of goodness than I have reached, but their goodness is of the same kind as mine. It belongs to the common stock of humanity. It has been attained. It has been wrested from ancient brutalism and later indifference, through the hard stress of life. Some have supposed that in part it was taught from above, and favored and nourished by heavenly gift, but it was not: they are wrong; it is exclusively human. It is such as human effort and experience have attained, and it is nothing more. I have my little part in it, and I long for a better portion. I have my conscience by which I estimate myself and my doings, and I have my moral standards, such as I have wrought out from my inheritance and my striving; and I have — best gift, I used

to think, of all that make my manhood — my love for moral excellence, and my eager and insatiable desire to be a better man. If I can attain to a higher degree and quality of goodness, this will be to me the very crown of my life. Yet the way of such attainment is not very clear to me. My conception of moral excellence is not as clear and worthy as I could wish, my standards of judgment are not what they might be, and my consistent devotion to the ends of goodness is far less than I would have it. I often disappoint myself, and often wonder how I am ever to satisfy even such aspirations as I possess. This is my status. It is not very satisfactory, but I have been hoping that I might rise to higher things.

My denial of goodness in God teaches me a lesson. It teaches me, all in a flash of light, that such goodness as mine is the highest goodness that exists. Other men may have more of it than I, and beings in

Mars or some dark orb near Sirius may have distanced us all in attainment, but the only goodness that exists is just such developed and developing goodness as I find in myself and my race. It is such as men have attained to. It has no source, except the struggles of humanity. It has no affinity with any dominant type of being. It has no standard above mankind. There is no standard to which human goodness is naturally destined to be conformed. It has no friend above, no inspirer and inbreather, no higher end or aim. I may not be the best of men, but all the goodness that anywhere exists or ever will exist is of the same type as mine. I may consult with students more advanced, but this school has no teacher, no standards, and no ideals. The idea of comparing my conduct with a perfect standard, blaming me for my failures, and cheering me on toward higher attainments, never occurred to any one above myself.

My efforts are unaided from above, unseen from above, for the heavens are bare and vacant of goodness, and there is no higher goodness for me to rise into. I am appalled at learning that the highest goodness is so low, and as for encouragement to rise above myself, where can I find it?

But the same question rises about goodness unsupported, that we met concerning unsupported rational powers. What is the rank and value of a goodness that has no support in the general order of things? These sensations of right and wrong, these estimates of good and evil, these horrors at sin and hungerings and thirstings after righteousness, — they are found to have no existence, affiliations, or affinities except in the thoughts of men. They cannot be tested by comparison with any external authority. The order of human events goes on without reference to them. The mind that has thought all things — for we must

admit the presence and action of such a mind, or stultify ourselves and all our thinking — has no sympathy with them. The mind that has determined what should be has made its determination without reference to any of these considerations. On what ground can I base the least confidence in my moral judgment, as I call it, when it stands thus unsupported and alone? Moral judgment is an exception in the world. There is no reason to suppose that it was ever intended by a mind that had sympathy with moral thinking or approval of what we call moral excellence. Most probably this whole realm of thought about morals represents only a feverish state of ill-developed and incompetent humanity. If the great mind can get on without goodness, surely we little minds may do the same, and so we may as well forget the whole matter, as a hopeless puzzle from one point of view, and a vain delusion from another. We cannot trust

our moral judgment or our moral sense. Our nature deceives us, and life is false. If God is not good, we cannot be sure of anything.

Many men allow their doubts about the being of God to gain power over them, without stopping to notice whither such doubts would lead them. Doubt may be blameless, and a doubter the most sincere of men, helpless, indeed, in yielding to what seems to him beyond escape. Nevertheless, it is wise to consider the whither. Is it easier to deny the being of God than to accept it? Do we leave our perplexities behind us when we yield to the difficulties that beset our theism? The truth is, that to deny the presence of mind in the universe about us, is to discredit all mind and all work of mind in ourselves, and to render our own thinking untrustworthy throughout; and that to deny the presence of goodness in the mind that we

are thus led to recognize, is to destroy the basis of all religion for mankind, to discredit the reality and worth of all goodness in men, and to declare our own moral judgments unworthy of confidence. When the facts stand thus, the acceptance of belief in God involves far less difficulty than the denial of it. The being of God is the indispensable support for our confidence in human thinking, and the only key to the understanding of religion and the human conscience.

The practical argument that I have thus ventured to present to you is more powerful to-day than it ever has been before. The view of existence that is now current requires belief in God, and strongly reinforces it. The present view of existence is the evolutionary view; and no view of the existing universe ever represented it, as the expression of mind, so fully as does the evolutionary view. For the sake of

my argument I was willing, a little while ago, to appear foolish while I talked of a world in which science was impossible. Such would indeed be the world that had no mind in it; but I well knew how foolish it seems to speak as if the world in which we live were such a world. The doctrine of evolution declares the unity and continuity of things, and thus proclaims that the field of science is universal. It now stands unquestionable that the field of intelligibility knows no limits. All things are subject to the operation of one method, which is intelligible to us. The range of investigation is boundless, and our abilities are limited through ignorance, and through lack of data and means of searching; but the doctrine of evolution places the difficulties all in us, and declares that the same rational method that we have observed wherever we could inquire is prevalent everywhere, so that if we could search all existing things we could under-

stand them. But if man can understand the universe in its long unfolding, it is because the universe in its long unfolding expresses the thoughts of a rational mind that is akin to the mind of man that understands it. By the doctrine of evolution, the universe is for the first time consistently represented as a universe of ideas, — that is to say, as an expression of God. From of old, Christian faith and doctrine have declared it to be so; but now comes the doctrine of evolution, to illustrate and confirm the declaration, so that it cannot be denied again. To deny the presence of mind in the universe is to be belated in the world of evolutionary thought. If the common man comes to a true conception of the world he lives in, he will find the day far past when he could question the presence and activity of the all-comprehending mind.

Not less strongly, though in a different

way, does the doctrine of evolution reinforce our belief in the goodness of God. A system of evolution is a system of unfolding of ideas, and is a system concerning which we may be sure that it has been thought of and thought through. Not at random does it move, but in accordance with certain ideals that manifest an ascending significance as the process advances. According to all analogy that we know, these ideals must have been present to the mind that organized and sustains the process. As the movement sweeps on, it is found to be ever more and more expressive of the qualities of a being capable of conducting such a process. Life, consciousness, reason, far-reaching intellect, — these form an ascending movement, rising toward resemblance to the original conceiving mind; and we never doubt that these qualities, slowly brought forth in the world, are qualities of the mind by which the entire process has been thought

through. But to these is added goodness. Goodness, moral worthiness, grows up in men. It is a quality without which all the other traits and attributes of humanity are incomplete and unsatisfactory. Life, consciousness, reason, far-reaching and mighty intellect, without moral excellence, leave man but an unfinished being, and defective in the highest region of his nature. Goodness is the crown of humanity, the indispensable final element in the making of completed men. This highest quality is slowly coming in to the human race, as intellect slowly came in before it; and the analogy of all preceding gains of man convinces us that it is coming in as yet another form of resemblance to that great mind which is bringing forth its own likeness from the long process of the universe. Mind has been developed in man through dealings with a world that is the manifold and helpful expression of mind. Mind in man has grown up in

response to the presence of mind in God. So goodness in man is growing up in response to the eternal reality of goodness in God. Human mind is supported in its processes by the sustaining reality of divine mind; and human goodness is supported in like manner by the eternal reality of divine goodness. Both virtue and religion are responses to the eternal goodness, and would be unsupported and misleading experiences, telling man falsehood, and luring him by false ideals, unless an eternal divine goodness, source of the like in man, were existent in God. To deny the divine goodness, original, perfect, and eternal, is to miss the point of the evolutionary process, and leave it as puzzling as a mindless world. If the common man comes rightly to know the world he lives in, he will feel the sense of the eternal goodness sweeping in upon him as a very flood of inspiration. His own childish attempts at goodness he will find sup-

ported and sustained by that which constitutes the universal order, and he will hear the call of existence, summoning him onward and upward, into the moral likeness of God.

II

DIVINE PERSONALITY

II

DIVINE PERSONALITY

THE present purpose requires the resuming and re-presenting of the conclusions of the first lecture. Influenced by the difficulties that we find in believing in God, we inquired what difficulties there are in denying God and getting on without admission of his existence. On the intellectual side, the conclusion was that we cannot deny the presence of a mind in the universe without vitiating our own mental processes and casting doubt upon the validity of all our thinking. Since the evolutionary method was discerned, daily has the evidence been accumulating that the universe has been thought through. If it has not been thought through, then there exists no essentially higher thinking

than ours, and our thinking cannot be shown to be worthy of confidence. On the moral side, the conclusion was that we cannot deny goodness to the mind that we thus acknowledge as existing, without declaring the entire field of religion void, and discrediting all our own moral convictions. If that mind is not good, there exists no goodness essentially higher than ours, and we do not know that the moral distinction and the moral sense have any genuine validity. In other words, our mental and moral life, and all religion too, are unsupported and untrustworthy, unless they correspond to a mental and moral life outside of ourselves, in the source from which we and all things proceed. Science on the one hand, and ethics and religion on the other, which are solid realities in our life, absolutely require and imply intelligence and goodness in the universal order, and in the mind which is its source. Stronger than ever is this argument, I

claimed, in this age of evolutionary thought.

For myself, I have no doubt of these positions, and I judge that they ought to stand clear and firm in all intelligent minds to-day. The possibility of contradicting them is daily passing out of the world, and the certainty of the all-embracing mind and the all-embracing goodness is destined soon to be recognized in evolutionary philosophy, as it now is in Christian faith.

Notice what this means. Since science and religion are possible, the great underlying Power has intelligence and character. That Power is capable of thought and of goodness. Intelligence and character, thought and goodness, belong, so far as we know, only to persons. They exist in rudimentary form and degree in lower animals, but that is only to say that they exist rudimentally where personality is rudimentally present. Intelligence and

character are personal endowments, and exist in proportion to the completeness of personality. In finding that there is a mind in the universe, and that that mind is good, we have at least gone far toward affirming that God is personal. We have attributed to him powers and qualities that we do not know except in persons, and it would seem natural for us to add "God is a person," as our next great affirmation. We are now to inquire whether this is so. Ought we to say, and can we say, that God is a personal Being? or are we shut out from saying so?

Those of us who were brought up under the influence of the Bible, handled in the fashion of all the Christian ages, began with no difficulty in thinking of God as personal. He was presented to us in such ways that it was quite impossible to think of him in any other manner. There was no apology for anthropomorphism; indeed,

there was no recognition of it, as a thing that needed a name. That God should walk in the garden in the cool of the day seemed as natural as that Adam should do the same; and that God should talk with Moses was no more strange, though far more solemn and impressive, than that Moses should talk with Joshua. "Thus saith the Lord," said the prophets. "I am thy God," said he to Israel.

When we came to study philosophy or to think in the atmosphere of philosophic thought, whether we were students or not, we began to ask questions. Philosophy works in the region of abstract thought, and it is not surprising that philosophy should talk more of the divine than of God. It describes existing realities in terms of quality rather than of form, and under its influence the preconceived lines of form readily shade off into indistinctness. So perhaps the personality of God grew dim to us. Moreover, we brought

from our Christian training itself the elements of a hard question. We were taught to think of God as personal, after the manner of human personality, and at the same time as infinite. How do these two thoughts combine? Is not a person necessarily limited and self-enclosed, while our word "infinite" is expressly declaring of God that he is unlimited? Is not an infinite person inconceivable, because of inherent contradiction in the terms? And so the more we dwell upon God's greatness, and fill out the meaning of his infinity, the vaguer may our sense of his personality become.

Moreover, in our time, science has joined with philosophy in making it harder to think of God in personal terms. Science has had no intention of showing that God is infinite, or of proving about him anything whatever; and yet modern science has done more than was ever done before to give tangible meaning to the old

word "infinite," for minds that were applying it to God. Our age is struggling with the vast conception of a connected, continuous, interrelated, and consistent universe; and those who believe in God need to conceive of him as capable of conceiving, producing, conducting, and fulfilling such a universe. Believers in God had long carried in their minds the old word "infinite," as a word comparatively empty of definite content; but science here offers the largest single contribution that has ever been made toward filling it with meaning. Never before in the history of religion or of thought was the sentence "God is great" so redeemed from emptiness and bare transcendency as it is, for one who believes in God, by the doctrine of evolution. Never, consequently, did the difficulty of conceiving of God as personal stand out so strongly. No metaphysical infinity is here attributed to God, but even harder to deal with in actual thought

is that practical infinity which the enterprise of the evolving universe implies in him. It would be easier if this practical infinity appealed to the imagination, which is akin to faith; but at least in the earlier stages of thought it appeals to reason and hard sense instead. We are not asked to feel God's immeasurable greatness, but are required to take it as a conclusion from facts, at the end of an argument. The effort to combine greatness with personality is thus transferred from the field of imagination and faith to that of thought, and the primary assumption of religion becomes a problem in the realm of theologico-scientific inquiry. It is no wonder that the living sense of God's personality grows dim in such a time, and that many wonder whether the conception that has always thus far seemed indispensable to religion is to abide with us in force hereafter.

Neither is it surprising that a fine poetic feeling offers itself as mediator

between the scientific conception of the universe and the sense of the personality of God.

> "I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

When Wordsworth wrote thus, he was not attempting theological suggestion or philosophical theory. He was not thinking of pantheism, or of religion, or of philosophy; he was thinking the thoughts of poetry, and reading the universal meaning of things. Yet he did suggest a feeling, in view of the universal presence, that might creep in as substitute for the familiar attitude of the soul in the face of personality. It would not be strange if such a poetic sense of the unseen and

vaguely felt indwelling spirit proved to be all that some minds could retain of belief in the personality of God.

Does it matter much? Well, it makes this difference. Religion has always regarded the divine as personal, and it would seem that it must always so regard it. Religion speaks to the divine, and believes itself heard. Polytheism says "they," of its many deities, and addresses them. Monotheism, with larger reach, says "he" of its sole deity, and in prayer says "thou." "Thou" is the characteristic word of religion. If we cannot retain in our belief something that essentially corresponds to what we know as personality, we shall be compelled to say "it" of the divine, instead of "thou" and "he." That will be a very great and far-reaching change. The substitution of "it" for the personal designations and words of address, obliterates what has thus far always been essen-

tial to religion. Some try to tell us that it would not destroy religion itself to make the change. They think we could have an "it" religion. But at any rate the change would work a tremendous revolution, and what was left would scarcely be recognizable to one who had known and lived religion in the old ways. It is a most important question, therefore, whether or not we can still say, in truth and without delusion, "Thou art God." On this question we seek for light.

We shall do well to prepare for our inquiry into divine personality, by seeking to know just what we mean by personality itself. I do not know whether a very precise definition is possible, or not; but at any rate the word represents a familiar group of facts, and these facts can at least be set forth with some clearness.

All that we know about personality we learn from knowledge of ourselves and of

our kind. All the personality that we are acquainted with is human. We do not call any sub-human being a person. Powers of the same nature with those that make up personality in us exist in lower animals, but not, so far as we can judge, in such degree and combination as to be equivalent to what we call personality. Something is lacking. Some of our dogs seem almost personal, and yet we do not regard them as fully so. There is a point at which the higher powers and qualities exist in such fulness and combination as to constitute their possessor a person; and that point, according to general understanding and use of the term, is at the lower limit of the human. How far above humanity the range of personal existence may sweep, and through how many orders of greatness, we may not know; but humanity is personal, and nothing below it is so regarded.

What are these powers and qualities

that go to make up personality? Intelligence is one of them, as no one doubts, — intelligence of such grade as is found in men. The power of volition is of course another, for will belongs to all animate existence, and is combined in man with his higher intelligence. Certain powers of feeling — of desire, affection, love, hatred, passion of various kinds — also enter, as we all know, into personality. These also are common property of animate beings, but in man they are of higher grade than elsewhere in the animate world. These elements of intelligence, will, and feeling are present in a person, and they are more than present, they are combined and held in conscious unity. It is true that they are combined by consciousness in the lower animals that we do not call persons; and we can never tell just how the personal combination differs from the non-personal that is below it. But we speak of self-consciousness, and of personal conscious-

ness, and of personal unity, and of personal identity, — names by which we affirm an undefinable but real fact. Somehow, in what probably must always remain a mysterious way, these powers are gathered up into a conscious unity, and the result is what we name personality. The person possesses the intelligence, and feels the passions and affections, and exercises the will. The powers are his, and his is the action, and he is himself. He is always himself, and not another. It is true that there is such a thing as abnormal change of personality, and double personality, concerning which we know facts that we are utterly unable to explain; but the normal course of personal life is continuous, with unbroken consciousness of personal identity, and with moral responsibility as unbroken as the consciousness. Moral responsibility, I say, for moral responsibility is the inseparable companion of personality; and from moral responsi-

bility comes the possibility, and the certainty, of character. It belongs to the very nature of a person that he does right or wrong, good or evil, and comes to be himself good or bad, or partly good and partly bad. To nothing but a person is character possible, but to every personal being character is certain to belong.

Can we define in few words that which we have thus set before us? Not perfectly, perhaps, but some one has said that personality consists in the union of intelligence with power. I should wish to add affection; and I would ask whether personality, as we know it, does not consist in the conscious unity of intelligence, affection, and power. Under this definition we should find rudimentary personality below man; but we should apply the full name, personality, to the conscious unity of intelligence, affection, and power existing in human degree.

Personality, thus conceived, is the highest form of life of which we have any conception. Of course we know that it is the highest form of life that has been reached in the evolution of this world, but we can say more than this. It certainly would seem to be the highest form of life to which it is possible for finite being to attain. Intelligence, affection, will; to know, to love, to act, — these seem to be the highest powers that the finite can hope ever to possess. If any higher powers than these exist or can exist, no sign of them is apparent anywhere in the order of the world or the indications of the unknown that existence gives. I freely own that I cannot prove that there are no higher powers than these. My limitation to three dimensions of space does not prove there is not a fourth, and my limitation to this triad of personal powers does not prove that no others exist or are possible. Yet in this noble triad of powers I find so splendid a unity and

completeness, and so fine a sufficiency for the purposes of existence, that I firmly believe that there is nothing in store for finite being beyond the elements that are now gathered in the conscious unity of personal life, — the power to know, the power to love, and the power to act.

I must now add another fact about personality, essential to the present purpose, — namely, that in human experience, which teaches us all that we know about it, personality is not at once complete, but is a growing thing. This is true in the case of the human individual. A new-born child is not yet a person. The elements of which personality is composed are indeed included in the inheritance from antecedent humanity and from all antecedent life; but only in the experience of living are these inherited elements developed. Only through experience in life does the child become able to exer-

cise the powers of thought, affection, and will. At first the exercise of these powers is tentative, fragmentary, unorganized; and only through practice can anything like organic personal completeness be attained. As for that fine and well-balanced unity of powers in which personality is completed, and which would seem to be the normal human endowment, only by the long and varied experience of life does it become possible. Indeed, no one has ever seen it yet. The longest lifetime is not long enough to bring the elements of personality up to that completeness, co-ordination and efficient unity of which by their nature they are capable. Progress in successful existence consists, in fact, on the side of one's own development, in the training of the powers that constitute personality, and the building up of that mysterious unity by which the person is fully himself. So it comes to pass that there is an ideal of human personality that lies far beyond all

present degrees of attainment in fulness and unity of being. Complete personality is the goal and crown of individual evolution. We have no difficulty in thinking of a human being in whom all that is essential to personality is far more perfect, and the efficient unity of powers is far more complete, than in any human being who has yet existed. Such a person, when he comes to exist, will be the ideal man. Through all favorable conditions and all normal progress, by work and struggle, joy and sorrow, conflict and victory, individuals are advancing toward this ideal. Life is too short for attaining it, but life is to be continued beyond the present scenes, and the long future may bring the ideal completion of personality.

Furthermore, what is true of the individual is true of the race. In the long experience of mankind, as well as in the career of an individual, personality is a growing thing. When we have drawn the

line of personality between man and the creatures below him, we might proceed to say that since a man is a person, all men are equally persons; but experience does not justify such a statement. Some men are far more fully and richly personal than others. There is such a state as that of race-infancy; and in that state some parts of humanity are still lingering. Prehistoric man, whether among the flints of glacial time, or at a higher stage, in the heart of Africa to-day, is less fully personal than historic and civilized man. The tendency of civilization, of education, of advanced experience, and of all enlarging influences, is toward the enrichment and completion of personality. I say no new thing when I say that there is a higher degree of personality in the best-developed part of mankind to-day, than there was in the best-developed part of mankind two thousand years ago. It has already been remarked that though the word

"person" is ancient, the present signification of it is modern, and that the abstract noun "personality" has no equivalent in the Greek language or the Latin, for the reason that the abstract idea that it expresses had no existence in the thought of the classical world. The thing that we mean by personality had not then been identified in thought, partly because it had not yet attained such proportions of fulness and efficiency as to take rank among clearly observed realities. Personality, as an endowment of human beings, has been in history an actually growing thing. Age after age has seen men possessing it in fuller degree. Stage after stage of historical progress has found the elements that make up personality further developed, the personal unity better girt and managed, the sense of personality more pronounced, and the uses of personality more largely fulfilled in the relations of life. As personality is the goal of indi-

vidual evolution, so personality is the goal and crown of the evolution of the race. Indeed, we do not reach the truth until we say that personality, and the completion of personality, is the goal of the entire process of evolution in this world. Man is the crown of the process, and full personality is the normal destiny of man. The experience of the race nourishes, guides, and develops personality, and the career of the individual is directed toward the attainment of it. Every individual moves from impersonal infancy toward full personal rank and force, and the race moves from a stage at which personality is infant-like, toward a stage at which personality in its individuals is large, rich, and fine. Personality is the crown of evolution.

Have I dwelt too long upon these statements about personality in man? But I have use for them. Personality is the

highest form of existence that is known to us, and toward the completion of this highest form of existence that we know, mankind is visibly advancing. Now I wish to see what we can fairly infer from this concerning God.

When we seek to know that Being whose existence underlies our own, and validates our mental and moral processes, we can dwell, in our inquiry, more upon the resemblances between ourselves and him, or more upon the differences. Differences and resemblances there are, of course, and to our exploring minds the differences at once present themselves. Great they are, and baffling to our thought, if we set them at the front and consider them the decisive element in our conception of God. But we must firmly hold that the differences between God and man are differences between beings that are essentially resemblant. Not only does

the Christian doctrine proclaim that man bears God's likeness, and thus assert that the resemblances run deeper than the differences; but the very existence of science, as we have seen, brings daily before our eyes the likeness of our minds to the mind that is in the universe. God and man are alike; alike with vast differences, but really alike. This is so, or else religion, science, and philosophy are all misleading and false together. The differences between God and man, the great unlikenesses, we will not minify, but will recognize to the full, for they are essential to the trustworthiness of our thinking. Our incipient and growing minds need the support of a mind infinitely vaster than we, in order to be sure of themselves at all, and the differences that often baffle us are really our rest and strength, when we think wisely of them. But when we seek to know what God is, we will not begin with the contrasts between ourselves and

him. It is our privilege to begin with the resemblances. We will not first inquire how there can be anything like what we call personality in God in spite of the immeasurable contrasts. We will ask what resemblances to our kind of personality we can trace in God, and then will open our minds to the significance of the differences.

What, then, is God? At the outset, God is a great Thinker. He is a thinker so great as to embrace in his thought the entire existence and movement of the universe. If this seems too confidently affirmed, remember the alternative. The universe has been thought through, or it has not. If it has not, there is nothing to give it meaning and consistency. But it has meaning and consistency, and we are constantly gaining fresh evidence that it has been thought through. God is a great Thinker. His thinking and his knowing must differ widely in method

from ours, but we have no need to fathom all the mysteries of his thinking; the fact stands firm, that he has so known all things as that all things derive a genuine unity from his comprehensive thought of them, and that thus he is a thinker and knower, unlike us, and yet more profoundly like us than unlike. Kepler was right when he said of the meanings that he read in the visible universe, "O God, I think thy thoughts after thee."

If the universe shows God to be a great thinker, there is good reason why we should take the next step, and affirm that God is also a great Willer. First of all, we do not know anything about thinkers that are not willers. Thought, so far as we have ken of it at all, is always accompanied by volition. From the lowest regions where thought appears to the highest that is known to man, this is the rule, — whatever thinks, wills. Nay, will runs even lower in the world of life than

thought, if that is possible, and seems even more fundamental and inalienable as an element in conscious being. And when we reach the vast and comprehensive thought, so wide-sweeping and far-seeing as to suggest that here must be the perfect thinker, surely here we have no reason to suppose a falling off in quality, and imagine this mind divorced from will. Moreover, the signs of will are found wherever the signs of this thinking mind appear. The universe, physical and psychical, is a system, expressive of a mind; and what else can be so probable as that the mind willed the system? There are some who think that all exertion or exercise of energy, in all forms whatever, proceeds through direct action of the will of God, so that the sum-total of force throughout the universe is simply God's strength, put forth in incessant activity by God's will. I confess I do not know how else to account for it, nor has any one, I sup-

pose, a clear and solid theory of the independent origin of energy; and yet I dare not theorize very confidently about God's willing, and do not care to insist upon any such explanation of universal energy as I have named. I do not need to press the description of God's willing into details, in order to assert that God is a great Willer. The overwhelming probability is, that the mind that thought the system willed it, and so caused it to be the system that was in force. Indeed, thought unable to express itself in will is but feeble and barren; and not such is the thought that comprehends all things. He who thought the system willed the system also.

But there is something to be added to thought and will. Remember that we found it just as necessary to hold that God is good as that God is intelligent. If we did not hold this, we could not permanently retain our confidence in our own moral con-

victions, and we could have no worthy religion. The alternative to a good God is universal moral desolation. So I say that God is good, and thereby I ascribe to him a character. Goodness implies more than intelligence and will; goodness implies affection. If God is good, God is a great Lover. Other words may be added to complete the description of the character that is covered by the one word "good," and I do not rule them out by selecting this. I select this because I want just here a word to describe the normal exercise of the highest moral excellence; and by the common consent of those who know what moral action is, there is no nobler word or truer than this word "love." An all-comprehending mind that wills a universe must will it in love, or else not will it worthily at all. God is either love or wrong, highest love or bitterest wrong. When once we have assented in any degree that God is good, we have committed

ourselves to believe in an eternal love, and so in an eternal Lover. The infinite Intelligence is an affectional Being also, caring for that which he has made, and regarding things that exist with feeling that worthily corresponds to their character. I know that it is a great thing to attribute to the great unseen One a heart, and to declare that he really loves his creatures. But I cannot say that he is good without saying this, and I cannot deny that he is good without stultifying my own moral and religious nature. So I say that God has a heart, or is a heart, as well as a mind and a will.

Thus we are sure that the Being who stands back of all existence that we can know resembles us in the qualities essential to personality. He is thinker, he is willer, he is lover. We can go one step farther yet, I am sure, and be safe in affirming that in him these powers are bound

together in a conscious unity. When I cast about for means of proving this, I am at a loss to find them, because the fact seems to me so obvious as scarcely to be capable of proof. We may remember that this is no rare combination to which our argument has led us, — this combination of thought, will, and affection in conscious unity. It is actually the commonest thing in all the human world, for it exists wherever there is a human being. Wherever these elements are found, they are found in conscious unity. What they would be apart, we have no idea. Thought without feeling, feeling without will, will without feeling and thought, — these are mere words, empty names, signifying nothing. If these powers exist apart from one another, it is something utterly contradictory to the nature of mind, will, and character as we know them, — not above our knowledge and beyond it, but against it, and destructive of our certainty. These

powers are so related to one another that each requires the rest, in order to any worthy exercise. Alone, no one of them could be itself. Indeed, if we entertain any large and fine idea of them, and think of them at all in their ideal fulness of meaning, we shall not be able to conceive of any one of the three as existing without the others. Here is a genuine triunity. Intelligence, affection, and will ought to be an inseparable triad, and such they are. Bound together in conscious unity, they supplement and support one another, and are sufficient to make an effective spiritual being. Now, if these high powers exist in the mind to which the world gives expression, of course they are bound together in conscious unity. Is that mind less completely organized than ours, and less effective? And where is our loyalty to that far-reaching modern idea, the idea of unity, if we hesitate for a moment to regard these essential powers of personal-

ity as held together in the oneness of conscious being? But I must not speak at length of this, for it is scarcely respectful to my audience to be trying to show that thought, character, and will, existing on a scale as vast as the universe, must exist as elements in the conscious life of One who knows himself and directs his own activity.

Yet I may add, by way of illustration, that yesterday, after the lecture, in which I had said that if there is no intelligent conceiving mind science is impossible, I was asked whether cause and effect without intelligence would not suffice to make a trustworthy order in which there might be science. My answer was that cause and effect without intelligence is something very easily put into words, but not so easily put into thought. Cause and effect without intelligence, — can you fill the words with satisfactory meaning? Do they express a manageable idea? What,

then, is the link between cause and effect? — for certainly there must be some principle of connection, or effect would not follow cause. We are accustomed to say that every effect has its adequate cause, and every cause its appropriate effect. There is a constant element of correspondence and equivalence here; the adequacy and appropriateness not only form an essential part of the idea of cause and effect, but constitute the living quality of the idea. Whence came they? How did adequacy and appropriateness in this field originate? How was such an idea impressed upon the universe? By what kind of agency has it been maintained in perpetual and universal operation? How are cause and effect kept yoked together by this unfailing bond of adequacy and appropriateness? It is not enough to say that force is the link between cause and effect, or to suggest power in any form as sufficient here. There is more than power

in this. The link between cause and effect is formed of two elements, — power and intelligence, or, rather, intelligence and power. Causation implies intelligence as clearly as it implies power. It implies intelligence as antecedent to the operation of power in the producing of effect from cause. The world of cause and effect is a world of intelligence, for the energy to which it gives expression is energy intelligently guided. No, there is no division or scattering. Mental powers are found only in a mind. We shall never find, with all our searching, the elements of personality separate from one another, lying about loose in the universe, operating piecemeal in the work of existence. We have never found them separate in the human field, and we shall never find them separate in the divine. Personality has exclusive possession of the powers that compose it. The elements of personality — intelligence, affection, and will —

always exist as elements of personality, and are never seen in any other form or relation. When we behold them expressed in that vast work which we call the universe, we may be sure that here also, in the mind from which the universe proceeds, they are bound together in the conscious oneness of personal being.

So I call God personal. Following the line of resemblance in seeking to know what he is, I find this at the end of it. Differences may be as they may, but with essential truthfulness the word "personal" is applied to God.

And yet this statement does not express the whole truth, for it leaves untouched an important fact concerning the nature of the difference between ourselves and God. It is sometimes said that the word "personal" may be true of God and yet inadequate; that God may be more than personal, — superpersonal, some have suggested, —

living a life so unlike ours that to call him a person is only to hint at what he is, leaving vast ranges of possibility for life that cannot be called personal at all. But I do not think this is the right account of the difference between God and us. Rightly conceived, the difference itself falls into the line of resemblances. The peculiarity of God is nothing else than this, that God is the only perfect person. If we knew all, we should know that God is more truly and fully personal than any finite being is or can be. He is the perfect type of all personality.

We have seen that human personality is never perfect, but is an ever-growing thing, with high possibilities not reached as yet or even apprehended. In the filling out, the balancing and the efficient wielding of the powers that make us persons, there are unattained possibilities immeasurably great. We are slowly growing toward them, perhaps, and in the great

future we hope to attain to some of them, for it hath not yet been manifested what we shall be. But in all that we may become, in fulfilment of our worthy possibilities, we know that we shall be like Him. The ideal of our personal constitution is not in ourselves, but in God, and in completing our personality we grow up into his likeness. This is our process from the beginning. Starting with the crude, unorganized, unconscious material that we have in infancy, we move on through the ascending course of life. We become aware of ourselves, we get our powers in hand, we gird up the loins of our personal unity as we advance, and so we become more completely personal as our years pass. But it is not merely ourselves that we are growing up to. The type of our personal being is not in ourselves, or anywhere in our human kind; it is in God. There exists one supreme, typical, perfect Person, and there also

exist innumerable incipient, adolescent persons, getting their personality as they go, growing up into his likeness. This is the story of personal existence. And yet we shall not attain fully to his likeness; he will always be beyond us. It is not for creatures starting from personal non-being to become entirely like the great Original, who is from everlasting to everlasting, whose thought is all-embracing, whose affection is perfect, whose will is universal, and whose unity is complete. He stands alone, in the unapproachable glory of the perfect Person. This is the difference between God and us, — a difference on the line of likeness, and a difference that inspires us to adore and trust the One who is like us and yet forever gloriously unlike.

Perhaps some one will wish to stop me here, seeking for clearness, and ask just what I mean by the perfect person, and whether I know what I mean by that

name. I am willing to answer, for I know what I mean. I know what a person is, by studying myself and others who are like me. What a perfect person would be, I learn from what a person is, by conceiving perfection of the powers and relations that constitute personality. I cannot describe a perfect person in all his glory, but I can tell what makes one. By the perfect person I mean the Being in whom the essential powers that constitute personality — intelligence, affection and will — exist in perfect quality and degree, and are perfectly bound together, and wielded in use, in the unity of self-directing consciousness. This is the perfect person.

And then questions may spring up on every side, touching on all the peculiarities of perfection. Do I know how a perfect person exercises the power of knowing, so that I can solve the mysteries of omniscience? Do I understand the working of the perfect will? Am I not obliged

to discuss the ancient difficulty about an infinite person, limited and unlimited at once? To all of which I have one answer. These things I do not know, and do not need to know. What am I, that I should understand the specialties of perfection, in any sphere? Why ask a child to define a man? Why expect a man to expound the peculiarities of God? I may know where they lie, but I can never describe them. It is strictly impossible that I should know just how the perfect person differs from imperfect persons in the operation of the powers that are common to both. If I were seeking to establish the divine personality to my own mind by defining its peculiarities, I should be doomed to fail. But I can establish it to my own mind by tracing out the lines of resemblance to the personality that I possess, and that is better, and sufficient. But, moreover, when once I have thus become satisfied of the divine personality on the ground of resemblance,

then the differences that once perplexed me find their meaning and glow with light. I did not expect to find in God a personality just like my own. If I could, he would be no God, but only a man like me. The mind that I have searched out in the universe is greater than I, and the God whom I have seen in the light of revelation is greater than I. My powers come quickly to their limits, — his never. Though mine should grow to their appropriate perfection, they will still be limited, adequate only to such existence as I was created for; but he is unmeasured and immeasurable. Far beyond the possibilities of human personality do the powers and glories of his divine personality extend. This is the glory of what I learn of him, — that his powers are great enough to lay in the created universe that everlasting foundation for all my mental and moral processes, by virtue of which I can rest in my fundamental certainties. God,

who is one in the unity of a perfect personality, is great enough to serve for sustaining and support to the intellectual and spiritual being of all the finite persons, offspring of his own personality, to whom he has given existence. This is the comfort that we may find in recognizing the perfect person, source of all our personality, sufficient to be our eternal rest, because of the resemblances, and because of the differences, between his personality and our own.

Thus does belief in divine personality commend itself. I have not been speaking of it in terms of Christian faith, or indeed of religion at all. I think it can be reasonably maintained, apart from religion, in the field of general thought. But when I say this, I shall be reminded that the doctrine of evolution is often, perhaps generally, regarded as unfavorable, if not hostile, to belief in a personal God. To

me, however, it seems quite otherwise. I cannot follow the thought of evolution through without finding the divine personality at the end of it. There it stands, not always to remain unnoticed and unacknowledged. Before I leave the matter I must show, in few words, why I say this.

It is an old story, too old to need telling now, that in the evolution of our world we have a forward movement, more and more full of traceable meaning as it advances. This bringing forth of greater and greater meaning is proof of a conceiving and directing mind. The idea of mindless evolution will be relegated before long to the chamber of outgrown things. The universe is the conception and offspring of a mind. What I now wish to say is, that the upward movement consists in the taking on by the universe of more and more of the likeness of the mind that brought it forth. The meaning of the

advance is this, that with every step there is something more like God than was anything before. The highest stage always expresses most of the conceiving and productive mind.

The process by which the earth itself was formed might have seemed to a beholder, if there had been one, aimless and vain; yet it was an orderly process, and that at least was like God. When it had become a world, and had been a world for ages, life appeared upon it. A wonderful thing was life, and wonderful in this, that even in its lowest forms it bore a likeness to God, the living Spirit, the conceiving Mind, such as nothing had borne before it. Higher it rose, and richer it became. Consciousness entered. Life ascended into mind, judgment, love, thus taking on greater and nobler likeness to God. In reason — godlike reason we call it — and in love and moral judgment we behold the very image of God, appearing upon

his highest earthly creature. Now gradually, out of the experience of rational life, personality grows up, and slowly moves on toward completeness. It is the conscious unity of the godlike powers of man. Man stands forth, not indeed a perfect or a full-grown person, but at least a newborn and growing person, bearing in his conscious unity of intelligence, affection and will, the high possibilities of the highest known form of being. On what principle shall we deny or question that this crown of human existence is simply one more resemblance to that original Being who is the type of all? The ideals of the unfolding universe have existed from eternity in the being of the conceiving and creative source, and the long work of time has been the impressing of more and more of the likeness of that source upon its offspring. Now we behold man, with spiritual powers so similar to those which the universe reveals, that he can understand

the universe, and with these powers gathered up into conscious personal unity, and thus organized for effective use. Surely the natural interpretation of all this is, that in having personality man must be the finite counterpart of the mind that conceived him. That mind also, we may be sure, must gather up in conscious personal unity the powers that belong to it. In man the old line of divine self-manifestation has not been abandoned, or diverted, but extended straight on in its old direction. Still does every gain in the human correspond to something eternal in the divine. Personality in man is simply a new form of likeness to God's eternal being, and growth in personality is growth toward God. God is personal.

If this looks reasonable, do not turn away from it till you have noticed a confirmation that is waiting. It is found in the direction that was taken by evolution when it came to man. Up to man, there

proceeded through unmeasured periods a physical evolution, a bodily unfolding and advance, accompanied by a development of mental or psychical powers also. But we are told that now, when man has come, there are no signs that physical advance is to proceed further through his line. It does not appear that he is to be the parent of new and higher physical species, but the movement of evolution has turned to the development of his spiritual powers. First came that which was natural, then that which was spiritual. God by the long process of life prepared the human body, fruit of patient evolution, fit for human uses; but when the body was ready, the spirit — if we may still use the familiar name — was not so far advanced, but was unformed and infantile. From the time when man first was man, God's patient process of evolution forsook the body, which it had now completed, and turned its energies to the soul, which was

still in its early stages. Age after age, the human spirit has been developing through the hard course of experience. Intelligence, affection, will, have been growing strong and clear, and have slowly been gathered more and more into that effective oneness which we call personality. In fact, the present work of evolution, so far as the human individual is concerned, is the forming, training, and completing of the person; and there is no sign that any higher work is to be undertaken on the earth than this. The finishing of the human personality is the highest earthly work of God. How clear and convincing a confirmation is this of the claim that the human person is the highest expression and truest picture of the conceiving mind, and that God, when we know him, will prove to be just that which personality, projected and expanded to perfection, would be!

Yes, the mind that conceived the world has been personal all the while, — personal

in having thought, affection, will, all bound into conscious self-directing unity. This personal Being, God, wrought upon the world until he had brought forth upon it man, the likeness of his own personality, and then he turned from other work to train the human personality for endless fellowship with himself. This is the purpose that unifies human history, and makes it the legitimate continuation of the great age-long process of the world. In the course of this latest work, God gave to men religion, in which they were moved to look up to heaven and commune with the power above them. It was his gift, indeed, and he did not forget that he had conferred it. The characteristic word of religion in all ages and stages of its life is "Thou," a personal word, a cry and call of the heart to one who hears. The characteristic word of religion is a pronoun of personal address. This word is true. There is no "it" back of all things and

over all; there is One who is rightly called "He," and addressed as "Thou." The source of being is personal.

"Speak to him thou, for he hears, and spirit with Spirit can meet:
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

The personal language of religion is not to be rejected as false, but stands as the truest language that the soul can speak or hear. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "From him, and through him, and unto him, are all things." This is the utterance of religion, and religion is right in its inextinguishable habit and practice of saying "Thou" to God. As truly as we are persons, so truly is he the perfect Person.

III

THE RELATION BETWEEN GOD AND MEN

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ACCORDING to the immemorial doctrine, and the immemorial feeling, of religion, the relation between God and men is a personal relation. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations;" — thou, a Person, hast been to our spirits as a home. "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer: thou shalt cry, and he will say, Here I am." Call this anthropomorphic if you will; nevertheless religion has always meant it, and has always meant the thing that it expresses, namely, that man may say "Thou" to God, just as fitly and truly as he may say "thou" to his fellow. The relation between the two, religion assumes and affirms, is a "Thou and I" relation. Christianity not only

assumes and affirms this in company with all religion that has ever been a comfort or inspiration to the heart of man; it assumes and affirms this more distinctly and positively than any other religion in the world has ever done. "Pray to thy Father," said the Founder of Christianity. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

Our thought in the second lecture did not move in the region of Christian doctrine. We were discussing the nature of personality, and seeking to judge whether the mind that is in the universe can be held to possess genuine personal powers and qualities. We did not begin by looking for the differences between that mind and our own, but rather by asking whether there is evidence of the existence in that mind, whatever the differences of mode may be, of the powers that we know as personal. For my argument, as my argument, I care nothing, but I greatly care for the

conclusion, and I should be very glad if those who listened felt that it was easier to accept than to deny the personality of God. I desired to show that the powers that we call personal in ourselves are manifested in the operations of the mind that expresses itself in the universe, and that in all sound reason these powers must be regarded as gathered up into a conscious personal unity in God. I sought to present personality as that highest form of dependent being which irresistibly argues its own counterpart as existing in the creative and archetypal Being to which, or rather to whom, we give the name of God. As I showed in the first lecture, it is incomparably more free from difficulties to believe in an all-embracing mind endowed with goodness than to deny it. Granted such a mind, it is really no step in advance at all, but only a necessary unfolding of what is implied already, to call it personal.

If these positions are sound, philosophy has no abiding objection to the primary assumption and assertion of religion. There is a Person out of sight, with whom human beings may sustain personal relations. We are not compelled to think of the Great Invisible as "It;" not until we have said "He," not until we are saying "Thou," do we do justice to the Great Invisible. God is a person. A personality so vast may, indeed, be to us unpicturable, but it does not follow that it is inconceivable. On the other hand, when we approach the question through the open door of resemblances, — a door opened wider to us by the doctrine of evolution than by any other view of things that was ever current among men, — we find that the personality of God is easier to believe in than to set aside. We cannot deny it, indeed, without leaving the well-known human personality unsupported and unaccounted for in the world.

So when religion stands speaking to some one in the unseen realms, no reason appears for doubting that there is some one there to be spoken to. Religion may speak unforbidden, and need not be taxed with unreasonableness, if it believes that its voice is heard.

When we inquire, as we are now to do, concerning the relation that exists between God and men, we start with the idea that it is a personal relation. This is much, but we can go farther, and make a more definite statement. We can give a definition that has support from both sides of our field of thought, from the scientific side and from the religious. The definition is this. The relation of God to men is a paternal relation, and the relation of men to God is a filial relation. The relation between God and men is that of Father and child. This statement I desire now to expound and verify.

I said that the definition that I was about to offer had support from the scientific side. It is often supposed, I know, that the doctrine of filial relation between men and God is purely a doctrine of religion, over against which scientific thought stands in criticism if not in opposition. The impulse to say "Father" is an impulse of faith alone, and has no support but such as faith affords it. The belief that God, on his side, thinks the thoughts of a fatherly heart toward us, is assumed to be simply the reflex of our own religious faith, and to have no standing in the court of reason or science. But I affirm that the doctrine of the filial relation has as true a home in the world of science as in the world of religion. When we say "Father," we not only make a venture of faith; we speak according to the facts. If we did not speak according to the facts, the venture of faith would be destined to end, sooner or later, in collapse and wreck.

But we need have no fear of this, for facts and faith agree in their testimony as to the relation between God and men.

The proof that I shall offer here is very short and simple. Consent, with me, to accept the conclusions that have been already reached. Take it for true, that we are indeed obliged to believe in a mind which has thought existence through, and is expressing itself in the things that come to pass in the universe. Grant that there exists a conceiving mind according to whose conception the universe proceeds. That mind, of course, is rational; we cannot leave this out of our thoughts, as we have seen, without leaving our thoughts themselves all unsupported and untrustworthy. That mind is essentially personal, knowing, loving, and willing, as really as we, though in modes differing from ours and partly beyond our ken. That mind is good also; we cannot deny it, as we have seen, without leaving all known good-

ness unsupported and uncertain, and discrediting all our religion and ethics. Take it for true, then, that there is a conceiving mind which is rationally conducting the long enterprise of the unfolding universe. Accept only this, and see what follows.

In the long process of things this conceiving mind has brought man into existence. That is the same as to say that God has created man, — the process and method of his doing so being unimportant in comparison with the fact. To say that the conceiving mind, personal, rational, spiritual, brought into existence man, personal, rational, spiritual, is the same as to say that God created man in his own image. Every man, so far as he possesses the powers of a rational and moral being, bears the likeness of God, to whom he owes his existence. Wherever there is a man, there God has brought into existence one who is like himself. That is what constitutes parenthood, as, in view of the common rela-

tions of life, we define the term. When the conceiving Spirit has brought into being persons like himself, it is not by mere accommodation of terms, it is scarcely even by metaphor, that he is called their Father. If it seems that this name must be considered figurative, then tell me by what literal name I shall set forth the actual relation. To call him their Creator is to speak in truth; but the name is inadequate, for the same conceiving mind has conceived the solar system and brought it into being. He is Creator of the solar system, but the solar system does not bear the likeness of his power to know, to love, and to will, as you and I do. What is the name that expresses the relation of the great Source of all to you and me, as different from his relation to the solar system, which cannot think and feel and will? What, but Father? What word sets forth the peculiar relation of created personal beings to him, but son? He has

produced us men, and we are like him in the essential elements of the personal constitution. So we are his offspring, and he is our Father. In these sentences I have used the word "God;" but I am not thinking as yet of the God of religion, the God and Father of Jesus Christ. My point is, that the originative Spirit, whose powers and qualities are manifested in the evolution of the world, has at last brought forth spirits in his own likeness, and that this makes him their Father, and them his children. To all rational beings everywhere, the conceiving and originative rational Being is Father.

And I do not see why we are not to give this name, even in this connection, its proper spiritual significance, which is that a father cares for his offspring. It is often assumed, I know, from various points of view, that an evolving universe must be the home of eternal indifference and unresponsiveness. Even if there is a mind

in it, there is no heart; no evidence exists that the God of evolution, if there is such a God, takes the slightest interest in his creatures. All is steady, impartial, passionless in his operation, and a man is to him simply like a rock or an apple-tree, — one of the products of his mighty movement, now here but soon vanished, and making no appeal to him. But let us put our common sense upon the question. Suppose only that there is a spirit, rational and kindly, who thinks the movement through, and understands it, and carries it forward. In this world, of which we are specially thinking, it is a long, long movement. After the material mass has become differentiated, so that a planet has found its orbit, millions of times does the planet swing round its central orb before any rational soul looks out from it toward the sun. But it does come to pass at length, that spirits similar in constitution and powers to the creative Spirit are liv-

ing on the earth, — spirits capable of thinking his thoughts after him, of bearing his moral character, and of growing up to full personality in his likeness, and to fellowship with his heart. Every spirit of them is born an infant, and the race of them is born in infancy, too; all is rudimentary at first, and yet the powers and possibilities are there, and the career of personal existence has been opened, with all its risks and glories. As the planet courses on around the sun, it becomes apparent, in process of time, that the movement of physical evolution has paused at man, so that higher forms of bodily structure are not brought forth from him, and the main work of evolution henceforth proceeds in the realm of his spirit, through the building up of his personality, and the developing of the powers in which he resembles the creative intelligence. And do you think that the creative intelligence takes no interest in the presence of this his own

miniature but growing counterpart in the world? To deny the interest of the creative intelligence in his own spiritual kindred, brought forth by his own long process, is to deny the existence of creative intelligence altogether, and go back to the fathomless difficulties of a mindless world. If man is not cared for from above and beneath and around himself, by the spirit that brought man forth in his own likeness, we shall be compelled to infer that there is no such spirit. Grant intelligence, and you are compelled to grant affectionate interest in kindred intelligence. Grant creative intelligence, and you will sooner or later find yourself recognizing a paternal interest of that intelligence in its spiritual offspring. The Fatherhood of God is a doctrine of evolutionary philosophy, just as truly as it is a doctrine of Christianity; and I am only foretelling the certain future, when I say that it will hereafter be recognized as such. The doc-

trine is not so rich there as it is in Christianity, for evolutionary philosophy does not know so much of God as Christianity knows; but the doctrine is present in both, as a description of the existing relation. The Christian teaching concerning the relation between God and man — the doctrine that this is a relation of father and child — is not a specialty; it is grounded in the reality of facts that are ascertainable outside the special field of Christianity, and is thereby confirmed to us as true.

I am thus led up to the discussion of the Christian teaching on the relation between God and men. But here I am met by question, if not by contradiction. Have I the right to say, as I have been saying, that Christianity represents this relation as a relation between Father and children? Is the statement true? If we inquire for the thought that has histori-

cally entered into the Christian teaching, we must admit that other ideas have been present, and have been more prominent than this. The simple and noble relation that is wrought into the nature of humanity has been overlooked, and the relations that correspond to institutions in human society have been preferred to them for purposes of illustration. The relation of a king to his subjects has been most commonly used as illustrative of the relation that God sustains to us. From unmeasured prehistoric ages, the habit of looking up to chieftains and kings has been with mankind. When the thought of God became clear, and it was felt that God is one alone, it was natural, and inevitable, that he should be set in the place of the kings, and regarded as the one almighty and worthy sovereign. "The Lord reigneth," "The Lord is a great king," "His kingdom is over all," — these were natural utterances of reverence toward the one

Supreme, whom men were beginning to recognize. Later, men could talk of the divine right of kings, as if God, the king first known, had authorized the human kings to reign after the likeness of his sovereignty; but if the earlier history could be thoroughly analyzed, it would be found more accurate to speak of the regal right of God, formulated in human thought after the likeness of human sovereignty. The first-known kings were human, and the glorious sovereignty of the one God was received as an inference from their relations to their subjects. This governmental analogy was useful. It was very largely true, and was profoundly instructive. But it could not be known in the days of kingship that royalty, age-long though its period might be, was only an episode in the long history of human kind which was created for brotherhood. Nevertheless, such is the fact. Thrones might stand for a while, and regal

rights might seem everlasting, and sovereignty might appear to be the final word by which to represent the relation of God to men. Yet royalty was a normal thing in human society only for a time, and was absolutely certain to yield, as it is yielding in our day, to institutions that have their ground in human equality and brotherhood. Kingship marks a long stage in human evolution, and yet a temporary one; it cannot, therefore, be the type of the abiding and eternal relation between God and men. And all the while, there was existing by the side of royalty another relation, not arbitrary, not established, not variable, not temporary; a relation built into the very existence of humanity and essential to its continuance; a relation, indeed, that is the very means of the continued existence of humanity, and is therefore the very counterpart of the relation of God the creative Spirit to his spiritual creatures. The parental relation is natu-

ral, permanent, unchanging, indispensable, and is by its nature the truest analogue that can exist to the relation between God and men. It was not until the period of kingly institutions had spent itself, that the truth about fatherhood could become deeply effective in the thought of men concerning God. But when once its fitness has been discerned, and the paternal idea has taken the place that belongs to it, behold, there is thenceforth no return to institutional illustrations and temporary forms of thought. Here the abiding has been reached. There exists and can exist neither institution nor relation that can supersede fatherhood in setting forth the relation between God and men, save as fatherhood comes to be interpreted as including the entire range of the parental, and the fulness of the motherly is gathered in with the fulness of the fatherly, to represent what our God is to us, and what we are to him.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when in Jesus Christ the living God makes an intentional expression and representation of himself to men, we find at the forefront the conception of his fatherhood. "When ye pray," says Jesus to his disciples, "say, Our Father who art in heaven." "Pray to thy Father who is in secret." "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." "Ye shall be perfect, as your Father is perfect." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" And in the personal life of Jesus his teaching found rich and illuminative illustration, for it was his glory that he fully lived the filial life with God as Father, and thus showed the world what the relation is. "O my Father," he said, in his hour of agony, "if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will,

but as thou wilt." By example and by precept alike, he taught us to look up to God and say "Father."

It is true, at the same time, that Jesus made much use of the kingly language. The mention of the kingdom of God was frequently upon his lips, and many of his parables illustrated the nature and movement of that kingdom. Thus we find him speaking, with abundant emphasis, both of the kingly and of the fatherly in the relation of God to men. All this is immensely interesting and significant. Upon him the ends of the ages were met, — the close of the kingly age and the opening of the paternal. The kingly conception of God was retiring, though it still had a long course to run before it would be gone; the paternal conception was entering, though it still had long to wait for full admission. He spoke in terms of the idea that was familiar to his hearers, and at the same time he spoke in terms of the

idea that was to supersede it through his influence. He spoke of kingship, which was vanishing away, and he spoke of fatherhood, which was the coming idea because it was the truer and the eternal. And it is immensely interesting, also, to note the history of the two ideas after his departure. When we come to the Epistles, which record the thought of the Christian generation that followed him, we find that the idea of the kingdom has almost wholly departed. The phrase now and then occurs, and the idea of sovereignty remains, not to be set at the front, but to be interpreted in the light of the new realities of experience; but the regal idea of God, so prominent in the Hebrew Psalms, holds sway no longer. The family idea now prevails. "We have not received the spirit of bondage, again unto fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "Ye are all sons of God, through faith,

in Christ Jesus." Hence the old title of address, "Brothers," not unknown elsewhere, obtains new significance and richness in Christianity. The Father makes the family, and the Christians find themselves to be brothers in the household of God. The change from the kingly conception of God to the paternal was only initiated in the apostolic age, and has been but slowly going forward from then till now. Even yet it is stoutly opposed by many Christians, partly from a spirit of humble reverence toward God himself, whom they think it morally dangerous to regard in so familiar a light as the paternal relation would suggest. Nevertheless, the transition is bound to go on and be completed, for it is a transition from a lower to a higher conception of God, from a lower to a higher conception of man, from an institutional to a natural illustration of the relation between God and men, and from a temporary to an eternal fitness in thought.

In such a case who can doubt that the paternal conception of God is the conception to which belongs the Christian future?

But this statement is not final, for it is still ambiguous, and Christian teachers are not agreed as to its meaning. To whom is God Father? and who are God's children? Upon these questions the Christion people have not yet come to agreement. Two views divide the field. Some will tell us, without hesitation, that God is Father to all men, and all men are sons to God. Others will dissent. They remember that special form of sonship to God which appears in the New Testament as introduced through the Christian experience, and will affirm that this and this alone is sonship. God is Father to Christians only. Of course he is Creator to all, but Fatherhood is solely a Christian relation. These are the two positions, — God's Fatherhood is natural, and universal;

God's Fatherhood is spiritual or religious, and therefore limited.

Between the two views there is not only difference, but controversy. Each side sadly wonders at the other, and feels that the other is sacrificing something essential to Christianity. Believers in the universal Fatherhood declare that those who deny it put an unchristian limitation upon God, denying the breadth of his grace, and making him less than perfect in his relation to his creatures. Those on the other side declare that believers in the universal Fatherhood do injustice to the eternal claim of ethics and religion. There can be nothing higher, they say, than sonship to God, and to proclaim this as the natural birthright of all men indiscriminately is to confound moral distinctions and ignore moral necessities. It is to lower the claim of God's character, and encourage men in their indifference to goodness. Thus it has come to pass that even the gracious

and inspiring fact of divine Fatherhood is a matter of sharp discussion. It is a sad fact, and yet we cannot wonder at it. The division is a sharp one, and very serious. It would be a sad thing to put an unchristian limitation upon God, and misrepresent his relation to his creatures by making it too narrow; and it would be an equally sad thing to diminish the claim of the eternal character, and encourage the belief that God regards the good and the bad alike. I do not wonder that in this controversy each side seems to the other to be bitterly wrong. At least, I do not wonder that this is so, as long as there exists a controversy in the case, and disputants misunderstand each other's position after the manner of disputants. In fact, both sides are right. The two positions fit together perfectly, when they are rightly understood, and there ought to be no controversy.

When I spoke, a little while ago, of

finding a good doctrine of divine Fatherhood in the evolutionary philosophy, it was evident that I had in mind a universal fatherhood, — a natural relation between God and men, which belongs to all spirits who have derived and dependent existence. I affirmed sonship for all who are brought forth in the likeness of the Creator's spiritual being. This I affirm, without the slightest hesitation. I am sure that this relation is in a most real sense a relation of parent and offspring, father and child. Such sonship is of course indestructible. The relation of God to all created spirits is essentially, and from the terms of the case, a paternal relation, so called not by fiction, and scarcely even by metaphor, but in plain truth. This is the position in which created spirits stand and must stand, unalterably, in reference to him who produced them in his own likeness as spiritual beings. This relation is the indispensable foundation of all ex-

perimental forms of sonship in the life of men. First of all, God is Father to men, and men are sons to God, from the very fact that he made them, and made them like himself. This is a truth that no one ought to question.

But it does not follow that the divine Fatherhood is realized in its full meaning in the lives of all his children, or that his sons are living as sons to him at all. All men are God's offspring, as Paul approvingly quoted from the Greek poet, and are entitled to the blessings of sonship to him. God is Father to all men, but not all men have to do with him in their hearts as Father. All men are sons to God, but not all men are living as sons ought. There is an experience in which sonship is fulfilled; and that is the higher thing that the New Testament tells of. A man who is a son of God by nature, may enter into his sonship, and become a son of God in conscious relation and character.

Yes, this is a case in which one who was born a son may, nevertheless, become a son; or rather, this is a case in which one who was born a son may therefore become a son. The relation to which he was born may become to him what it ought to be, and the meaning of divine Fatherhood, unknown to him before, may be revealed in his experience and made real in his life.

Paul and Nero, for example, are sons to God, brought into existence by him in his likeness. But Paul and Nero do not stand before us in their history as equally sons to God. To one the relation is not only unknown, but worse than blank, for he loves the evil that his Father hates, and lacks the essential elements of his Father's character. The other knows who his Father is, knows of what sort he is, loves him, delights in his character, chooses to be like him, and is living at home with God as a loyal child. God is true to the

relation which his creatorship involves, and toward Paul and Nero alike his heart is unchangingly paternal. Both are God's offspring. But in one the natural kinship to God has ripened into moral and spiritual kinship, while in the other the natural relation to God stands unrealized, unquickened, unperceived, and is daily sinned against. Deep and radical are the differences between the two men, and deep and radical are the differences between the sonships that they are actually in possession of. The original fact of sonship to God is the same to both, and yet see two sonships actually existing, heaven-wide apart in moral significance. One of the born children has become true child to the real Father, and the other has not.

Do I need to say more? Is it not plain? All that I need to do, I think, is to dwell for a moment upon what the fulfilment of the natural sonship consists in. That sonship to God into which all men are born

is not complete when they are born, for it is intended to be spiritual as well as natural. It is not complete so long as they are ignorant of their Father, or indifferent to their Father. It is not complete so long as they are bad men. The completion of sonship to God consists in religion and in moral excellence. The two are closely connected; religion is relation to the Father, and moral excellence is likeness to the Father. What can be plainer than that in these the normal sonship is attained, and the natural sonship becomes what it ought to be?

So it may well come to pass that one who is born to be a son shall enter upon the life of sonship, and shall practically for the first time become a son. He takes the child's place; he makes his own the filial spirit; he lives in spiritual fellowship with the holy One, who is his Father; he conducts himself as a loyal son to God. All this is new in his life. Call the begin-

ning of it a new birth; say that he has become a child of God: you will be speaking truly. And yet you will be saying nothing contrary to the claim that God was always his Father, and he was always God's child, for this completed sonship is only what he was born for. He has now come to himself, and entered into his own, and received the portion that belongs to the son of such a father. The natural sonship is now coming to its proper spiritual completion. The filial life, such as Christ tells of, is the only normal life of man, and the Christian relation to God is the only normal human relation.

The two sonships, natural and spiritual, universal and special, are the two sides of the shield. Why need there be any further discussion about them? We cannot lose our natural sonship, but our spiritual sonship, which is the crown of the natural, we cannot possess at all, except as, through his action and our own, we come

home in loyal fellowship to our Father. Here is no limiting God's loving and faithful relation to his creatures, and here is no setting good men and bad on one level in his paternal favor. If I could lift my voice so that all Christian people could hear it, I would say to them, Cease from your strife over the divine fatherhood. Recognize the universal sweep of his natural and unalterable paternity, and believe that it is a paternity full of holy love. Recognize also the moral exactingness of this natural paternity, and perceive that its full meaning can be realized only in that spiritual family relation of which Christ is the mediator.

Having spoken thus of Fatherhood and sonship, we are ready for a comprehensive statement of the relation between God and man. Dare I make one? Yes; for, imperfect though it is, I am sure that what I am about to say is true. Here it is. God is

the source of the being of men. He has brought them into existence in his own likeness, and is a Father to them, in fact and in feeling. He owns them, and owns his responsibility for them. He cares for them. He is worthy of their love and confidence, and his will for them is a will for their goodness. Men are born his sons, and can become their true selves only by becoming his sons indeed, in moral and religious fellowship with him. Since they are his sons by birth, he desires them to be his sons in fellowship and character, and is satisfied with them only as they are giving themselves to the filial life.

I am sure that this statement is true, for it accords with what we learn of God from the order of the world and in the revelations of Christianity. The world of such a Father-God is the world that we live in; and the more we know, the more shall we find it so. And yet I know very well that mystery, perhaps to us at present

insoluble, attends this answer to our question, as well as any other answer that might be given. I stand in awe when I speak of the relation of God to all men, and declare it to be unquestionably a paternal relation, so vast and mysterious to me is that little word "all," which I am constrained to use. Too long have we been narrow and provincial in our conceptions of humanity, talking almost as if Jews and Christians made up the humanity that stood in close relations to God. The time has come when by "all" we must mean all. We must contemplate the relation of God to the entire race of men that he has brought into existence, and to all the individuals that compose it. We must not leave multitudes in forgetfulness. In "all men," we must include the first really human beings that ever lived, and all the prehistoric race, and all the generations of humanity in all the nations of the earth, and all that are to follow, as long as

mankind shall exist. Our present inquiry concerns the relation of God to all of these, and of all of these to him. Only too well do I know what vast unanswered questions, and questions perhaps to us unanswerable, lie waiting for us, however we may define this relation. But I cannot change or withhold my definition because of this condition of things, for I know and am sure that the definition that I have given of the relation between God and man must be substantially correct. It corresponds to what I am sure of, concerning the God of the creation, in whose likeness and at whose call the entire humanity has come forth to being; and it corresponds to what has been made plain to us by Jesus Christ, in whom God revealed himself to men. We cannot reasonably or reverently think otherwise than that God, the source of humanity, is Father to men in fact and feeling, acknowledges his paternity of them, cares for them, and desires

their good; and that men, born for the filial life, come to themselves and their own when they enter the life of voluntary sonship to their holy Father, and only then. This must be true of men as men, or rather of men as spiritual beings, no matter when or where they live, or what their stage of development may be. Impossible though it may be to answer the questions that come with such a statement, still it is impossible that the truth should be radically different from this.

Here many lines of thought open before me, but there are two that have vital importance. Of the significance and effect of the relation between God and men in the realm of ethics, I intend to speak in the next lecture. Let me speak a few words now upon the significance and effect of this relation in the realm of religion.

In the light of the relation that exists between God and men, we see at a glance

what place belongs to religion in the life of humanity. Here we have such a relation of man to God as that religion is obviously normal and necessary to mankind. Whatever is human, was made for religion; that is plain. Religion is the life and experience of the human soul in relation to higher spiritual Being, upon which it is dependent. To this brief definition we might add other elements if we wished to define closely; but this, which touches the heart of the matter, is a definition that suffices for the present purpose. The idea of religion implies that there is some higher spiritual Being, with which — or, as we might just as well say, with whom — the spirit of man can hold intercourse. If there is no spiritual being higher than man, of course religion ceases to be. But if there is a spiritual Being, the conceiver and creator of all, from whom man's being is derived, and from whom there comes forth upon man a genu-

ine paternal interest, then religion stands firmly grounded as a natural and necessary part of the normal human life. Toward such a Being it is natural and normal for man to turn, in reverence, devotion, and prayer. Dependence, obligation, and the desire for fellowship, all conspire in drawing the heart of man toward this his God. If filial fellowship with God is that which he must have, in order to fulfil the sonship to which he was born, then plainly man was born for religion, and religion is an essential part of his proper lot. He may sometimes forget it and be false to it, for it is sadly possible for him to be false to himself; but the order of nature will kindly avenge itself upon such forgetfulness, and religion will not be allowed permanently to be omitted from the common life of man. Though he banish it, it will come back in new forms, to grow sweeter and stronger as life moves on. A child is born to grow up in the family,

and cannot properly grow up anywhere else.

As to the character of religion, the relation that we have been considering gives us a helpful word of practical definition. According to this relation, religion is to man a family matter. It is not a matter between himself and an abstraction, or a stranger, or a God to whom he bears no kin; it is a matter between man and his Father. It is a family matter, a matter in which sweet and helpful relations are involved, a matter in which a man may find himself acting out his spiritual nature in simple and normal wise, living at home, where he belongs, and where his true blessing dwells.

It is this, I suppose, that has made religion to exist. Investigators into the early history of mankind have labored to trace inductively the origin and growth of religion, and show out of what forms of experience, external and internal, the

ideas and practice of religion grew up. The inquiry is a worthy one, and is attended by valuable results. The genesis of religious feeling may to a great extent be traced. But it is a mistake to imagine that inductions thus obtained can show what it was in human nature that made religion necessary to man, or what it was that kept religion alive during the long ages in which it was to mankind far more a burden and a dread than a source of comfort. All forms of religion have been forms of man's grasping after that filial divine fellowship for which he was born. Saint Augustine's great word might stand as key-word for the religious history of mankind, — "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless till it find rest in thee." If man had not been God's offspring, though he knew it not, he would not from his earliest days have been feeling after his Father. Feeling after his Father he has always been, groping after

that family relation to which his nature made him heir, seeking to be at home with the powers above him, to which he was akin. And in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.

But do I quite mean what I say, when I call religion a family matter, a matter between child and Father? for that would imply that throughout the life of religion the Father was as real as the child, and as present, and as active. It ought to mean that in the activity of religion the Father bears his part as well as the child, — nay, more than the child does, or can, since the Father is greater than the child, and wiser, and more capable, and more interested, too. Do I mean all this? Yes, I mean all this. I cannot answer all the questions that it involves, but I am not at liberty to believe anything less concerning the relation between God and men. In this relation it must certainly be true that

God is far beforehand with his children, in promoting that fellowship in which religion consists. He moves forth to his offspring, not meeting them half-way, but going far more than half-way, and even inciting them to move forth toward him. To Saint Augustine's key-word for the history of religion, we may add this from a greater than Saint Augustine: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." The history of religion is the history of the Father's long seeking for worshippers who shall worship him in spirit and at the same time in accordance with reality. He seeks long and patiently to be worshipped, himself, the real God and Father, for what he is, by the real man his child, in the sincerity of his soul.

So from of old, even in prehistoric days, when men were groping after God, God was already reaching forth to men. As

they gained their bodily and mental powers through the response of life to its environment, so they gained the use of their spiritual and religious powers through response to an environment that was wholly invisible, but not less real on that account, — an environment of their Father's forth-reaching love and care. All down through the ages of religion, there has been something that bore the nature of revelation, an intentional imparting of outward knowledge or else of inward light, proceeding from God himself, who willed that it should come to pass. This impartation from God the invisible environment, became more definite and helpful as the possibility on man's side increased. The crown and fulness of revelation came in the appearing among men of Jesus Christ, through whom the Father of men made his clearest self-expression, and wrought his lowliest work of help for his human offspring. Through him it was made plain how the

Father, who is in secret, feels toward his children, and how he seeks to help them out of their own evil into their normal sonship. Consequently, through Jesus Christ there has been wrought the highest and worthiest experience of sonship, the completing of the filial relation through faith and love and purity. Here has grown up an experience of sonship to God, so rich and full and satisfying that many have overlooked all sonship besides, and affirmed that none but this was genuine in any sense whatever. Yet this spiritual sonship is only the fulfilment of God's creative ideal, expressed when he created man in his own likeness. In Christ comes the fulfilment of the religious relation, because in Christ has come the fulfilment of the family idea of God. To those who are in Christ, God is Father, in the sense that from the beginning he had in mind, and men are his sons in the manner that corresponds to their creation and fulfils

their destiny. Religion is, therefore, truly and fully a family matter now. So Jesus taught us, when he bade us pray, "Our Father which art in heaven." So Paul had learned when he said, "We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." So John knew, when he wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." The relation between God and men is such that in all highest and holiest religious experience it is simply completed in its true meaning. The holiest and most loyal man that shall ever walk the earth, or love God and do his will in the immortal life that is now invisible, will simply be a full-grown son of God, who has experienced the full meaning and blessedness of the relation between God and men.

I am intensely interested in the fact that I have found this relation between God and men attested, as it seems to me that it is, both by the natural order of

the world and by the Christian revelation. It is, indeed, an interesting fact, and useful in our apologetics. The modern method of proof, we know, in regard to great realities, is by comparison rather than by direct argumentation. We do not construct and depend upon separate forms of proof, either syllogistic or analogical, for the existence of God, or the immortality of man, or the validity of the moral law, so much as our forefathers did. We know that we live in a universe, and we believe in the unity of things. We lay things out before us, and see how they fit together; and the convincing evidence in favor of a view of things is that it does fit. We carry along the deep conviction that the universe is one, that things agree, and that when we find the right thing it will fit in with other things, and that will be its vindication. The explanation that most thoroughly explains is the one that we accept as the true. We must needs go

carefully in this, for we are liable to error, and may have errors to correct, and yet we are sure that the method is trustworthy. On this method it comes to pass that one thing supports another. Confidence is cumulative. The universal order confirms the separate parts that fit together to compose it; and the separate parts, fitting together, confirm our confidence in the universal order.

It is, therefore, both interesting and satisfactory to me to find the evolutionary view and the Christian view of the relation between God and men so far bearing one testimony. See how they hold together. The Spirit of the evolving world is truly our Father; and by that name Jesus bade us call God. The Spirit of the evolving world is good, or else we know nothing about goodness and cannot trust our own being; and the Christian revelation declares God to be infinitely good. The Spirit of the evolv-

ing world must be interested in us, as spirits akin to his own originating self; and through Christ we have learned that God is love. The ideals of the evolving Spirit are impressed upon his work, and man is the personal spirit, most like himself, in whom the highest ideals, the moral, ought to be realized; and under Christian teaching I long since learned that we were created in God's likeness, and had it for our normal destiny to grow up into resemblance to his moral excellence. When I find two witnesses agreeing, and so confirming each other's testimony, I receive each more confidently because of the other. I perceive that the unfolding world, informed and directed by the paternal Spirit whom I find expressed therein, is a natural home for such a religion as Christianity, the religion of the divine Father, and that Christianity is such a religion as it is reasonable to think that I may find as the crown of religion in such

a world. Hence, believing in Christianity, I believe also in the evolutionary order of the world; and believing in the evolutionary order of the world, I believe also in Christianity.

IV

THE MORAL EFFECT OF THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

IV

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WHAT has been the total effect of religion upon morals in the long lifetime of humanity, it is impossible to discover and difficult to guess. If we inquire, the field is too vast for us, and over the larger part of it hang the prehistoric mists. Within the part that we know something of, we are haunted by a fallacy, from which it seems impossible to escape. We persistently carry back our modern standards of ethical judgment, and estimate the morals of the past by the tests of the present. "How low, how fearfully low," we exclaim, "were the morals of that past day! We are shocked by the horror of it. They had religion, and it was a mighty element

in their life, and yet in morals they rose no higher than that. Surely religion cannot have elevated them much; perhaps it even depressed them." Even in going back two or three centuries, and estimating the effect of Christianity upon the conduct of devout and conscientious Christians, as the Pilgrim fathers, we fall into this misjudgment. "Put yourself in his place," appears to be one of the counsels of perfection, not a rule for ordinary mortals. Whereas I suppose that all we can reasonably ask to find is, that religion, in some given period, historic or prehistoric, has enabled men better to live in fidelity to such moral standards as they had, and has helped progressively to raise their standards. If this has been done, religion has been helpful to morals, even when both were low in grade.

If we knew all the facts, I have no doubt that we should find that religion, all through human history, has been on

the whole a real help to morals. There have doubtless been exceptions, and religion has sometimes led men to violate their best moral convictions. But these have not been commonest, I judge, in those lower grades where we would first suspect them, but on higher levels, where ethical training has sometimes been better than religious, and the standards of the two have come to differ. Yet this has not been the ordinary thing in history. On the whole, religion has reinforced and elevated the moral sense. It has added sanctions of its own to support the claim of duty, and offered motives that were helpful to good living. Throughout the human period morality has been purer and more progressive by reason of its influence. I do not suppose that I can demonstrate this, nor do I suppose that demonstration is called for. The helpfulness of religion to morals is not generally doubted.

The principle of the usefulness of religion to ethics is plain enough. Let me speak of the human aspect of it, before I come to the divine. Religion brings in influences and motives from the invisible world, to affect the conduct of men here and now; and in the invisible world, where gods are located, the worthiest human ideals are enthroned. The best that men have known they have placed yonder, in the divine; and back upon them have flowed the wholesome effects of their own best conceptions.

Only see how powerful a combination this is. The very fact of an acknowledged connection of present life with a world invisible — which world invisible can be nothing but a world spiritual — is by itself a great thing for man. There are dangers in such a thought, I know, — dangers of ignorance, of error, and of fraud; dangers so great that some have thought it would have been as well if men had never thought

of relation with a world unseen. But what would that have meant? Thank God it has not been possible, for it would have meant that humanity was of this earth alone, and had no valid ties or interests or obligations above it. As it is, religion has imported to the present life motives and sanctions from above, and has brought to human existence a largeness, a dignity, a solemnity, not otherwise possible. No one can estimate the contribution that religion has thus made to the significance and the worthiness of human conduct. Now add to this the other fact, that in that world invisible the best that men have thought is located by their imagination. In some form or other, the human ideals are there set up for admiration and for worship. Only in a rough and approximate way may this sometimes appear to us to be true, and with that strange perverseness of which I spoke at first, we may refuse to conceive

that such ideas as we find apotheosized were ever ideals to any one. Nevertheless, the fact is unaffected by our lack of imagination and our unsympathetic superiority. Men did think of their gods in terms of their best ideas. The qualities that they most admired they beheld in their deities; and back from enthronement in the world of gods came these ideals of men, to exert a helpful influence, such as it was, in the realm of daily conduct. Thus the best that was human obtained a sanction from the divine. Slight and slow the uplift may have been, but who does not see that here we have a means of uplifting for the ethical life?

Is religion, then, just a human invention? No, it is a divine gift also. I do not believe that its helpfulness to morals is solely the fruit of man's apotheosizing of his own ideals. I believe, as I have said already, that the long history of religion has not gone on unnoticed or

untouched by the living God. He, from whose conceiving mind the human race came forth, has always had relations with that race in respect of religion. While man was deifying his own best conceptions, God was aware of it, and, in ways that I am unable to describe or explain, was doing his helpful part for religion.

This statement raises questions enough, but it is true. Men have believed in ten thousand gods, but there has been only one God meanwhile, and he has always been interested in his creatures. None of us know him very well, even now; our thoughts of him are crude and poor; and yet we believe that he is interested in our religion. Where, then, shall we draw the line in the past, and say that beyond it our brothers, bearing his likeness too, were so ignorant and crude that in their religion he could take no interest? We may be sure that he has watched the long movement of religion, and has helped the spirit

of man to rise above this world, even when it could rise but a little way. When once we have banished the groundless idea that every touch of God must immediately produce what is perfect, we shall have no difficulty in believing this. And if we really and vitally believe in God as the creative source of all spirits that have ever lived, we shall have infinite difficulty in believing anything different.

In the course of time God, seeking his children, was able to make himself known to them more clearly and adequately. His manifestation of himself is called by Christians revelation. We are familiar with the record of it in the history of the Hebrew people. In seeking to understand revelation, we may not be able to answer all our own questions, or to agree in telling just how the Eternal Reality, God, bore in upon the hearts of men the sense of what he was; but certainly this is exactly what he did. It was not merely

that men thought him out, and rose, through experience, to worthier views of his character. This they did, and some would have us believe that this was all there was of it. But they were not alone in the doing of this, for he was there all the time, and was presenting himself to them, while they were seeking him. Does any one doubt it? God was not passive while his children were active in thinking him out; he was active as well as they, and the knowledge that they gained of him was his gift as well as their attainment, and may fitly be called a result of revelation, or of God's unveiling of himself to men. But let us not fail to understand that on his side this was no unique or solitary act. In what we generally agree to call revelation, within the period of Hebrew history, God was simply advancing further, as the time and conditions now allowed, in that long movement of paternal interest in his creatures, of which the

unrecorded ages of the world had already contained manifold evidence. What was said by Paul to the Lycaonians might just as well have been said to the lake-dwellers: "The living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is, suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways, and yet left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you rains from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." And when Paul said, "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me," he was speaking of a later and greater step in the same great progress of self-manifestation. Thus the divine part has always been as real in religion as the human.

As for the effect of God's self-revelation upon morals, this began to attain its effective and worthy power when God was manifest as One, and as Good. The best

possible form of religion is, of course, the religion that recognizes one good God, and recognizes him worthily, in worship and in conduct. Where such discernment is present, however dim, the effect in ethics must be good. In the days of the Old Testament this came to pass more fully than before, and the moral effect appeared. The moral effect was this: men were told that if they desired friendly relations with God, they must break off their sins.

So said the prophets. God is holy, God is pure, God is righteous, but men are sinful. If you desire to have him for your God, you must break off your sins, and live in holiness and righteousness before him. Thus the prophets thundered. The same teaching was expressed in symbolic form in the Levitical institutions, so that prophets and law-givers alike proclaimed the one duty of men, to put away their evil if they desired friendly dealings with their God, since God was

holy. Thus did religion assert itself, and announce its claim in the field of ethics, as soon as it was perceived that God is One, and God is good.

Men were told that they must put away their sins. We do not need just here to discuss the nature of sin, or the theory of its connections in the universe, interesting though it would be to do so. But we have to do with it here, because it is so tremendous an element in the relation between God and men. When we study sociological ethics, we meet with crime, and vice; but when we come to the deepest ethics, the ethics of the soul in its relation to God, we encounter sin. God encounters sin when he seeks to fulfil the destiny of his children. It is the thing that resists him, not merely in the manner of inertia, but more in the manner of wilfulness. It includes vice and crime, and much that is neither. It is the choice and habit, the will and character, by which the ideal of

the conceiving Spirit is rejected, and his purpose is resisted. In this definition I have intentionally spoken of it not in terms of religion or revelation, but in terms of the organized and meaningful world. It is often assumed that the evolutionary view of the world has no place for sin, which indeed is a thing uncounted upon outside the realm of religion. But only suppose a conceiving Spirit, in whom the moral ideals of personal existence are present and to whom they are dear, and the thing that we call sin can be understood. Suppose that in seeking to bring his spiritual offspring along the road of life to their appropriate destiny in fellowship with himself, he finds himself resisted by them. The blameworthiness of their resistance varies, and he always judges it righteously, but it exists; there is real responsibility and real blame in them. They cling to what was blameless or even normal once, in lower stages, and insist

upon keeping it on beyond its day, to corrupt and spoil a higher state of being. They love what is inferior, and cleave to what is unworthy of them, and will have none of that higher life which is dear to him who created them for himself. This blameworthy resistance to the upward movement which is dear to the creative Spirit, is just as intelligible in an unfolding world as it is in the realm of religion. To the Mind that conceived the universe, as well as to the God of Christianity, the thing that is spoiling his offspring must be hateful. And so sin is a reality in the world, and its hostility to the ruling end and purpose of existence is the point of evil in it, whether God be thought of as the God of evolution or as the God of salvation.

In the presence of sin, the God of evolution and the God of salvation are one. The one thing clear and certain is, that God must be against sin, in his attitude

of mind and in the administration of the world. He is against it because it is against him. It opposes him in the fulfilment of his creative purpose, and therefore he opposes it. Hence we are not surprised to hear the voice going forth with tremendous energy, telling men that if they are to have to do with God they must put away their sins. This is the voice of moral nature and necessity, and it cannot be silent. It is the voice of righteousness and of love. It is the voice of a Saviour.

Notice now the form in which for a long time this appeal of God to men was made, — or, in other words, the mode of entrance of the doctrine of God to the field of ethics. The appeal was long made principally in the form of command.

This was naturally the first form; the divine sends its requirements down to the human. The will of God must be obeyed, and it is made known in commandments,

mediated usually through messengers. This was the instinctive first thought when men began to think of dealings between themselves and higher powers, and this was the thought and feeling of the religious Hebrew spirit. The kingly idea was dominant, in association with the idea of transcendence. God was above all. From the heavens he looked down upon the earth. It was as a king that he sat above, "a great king, above all gods." It is true that he visited the earth, as when he came down in power and glory at Mount Sinai. It is true also that his voice was heard on earth, in the thunder, and that men said, "The whole earth is full of Thy riches: the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Nevertheless, God was predominantly the king, ruling above, uttering law, claiming obedience, and sending to the world by the hand of messengers the spoken will of a sovereign.

When I say that for long the best religion in the world was cast in this mould of sovereignty and commandment, I mean more than that men guessed at the truth thus. I mean that God was willing to be known thus. God was moving toward men, as well as men toward God, to the end that they might know him better. But his approach to men must be made in forms that they could profit by. The kingly conception of God was partial, but was not untrue. It represented a great truth, and represented it effectively, — the truth of his greatness and his rightful supremacy. It was right, therefore, as well as natural, that religion should for the time be cast in the mould of royalty, and the idea of sovereign authority should be at the front. With the idea of sovereign authority went the idea of commands as from a king, and the idea of obedience, such as loyal men give to their rightful rulers. Thus came together this group of kindred ideas: God

sits as king over the world; God rules by law; God brings or sends his messages of law to men; men learn their duty through God's commanding them; men must obey God's commands.

Thus, by the way of law and commandment, religion entered the field of ethics, and the conception of God became effective in morals. A natural result was that the commands were largely prohibitions. This is the way of governments. To this day, on the statute books of states, law touches ordinary conduct mainly by way of prohibition, or else of limitation and restraint, which is partial prohibition. God's voice was oftenest heard saying, "Thou shalt not." Positive requirements were added, and the constructive element was not absent from this scheme of command for human duty, and yet the tone of the whole system inclined to the cautionary and prohibitive, and in the great system of commands the

course of action was guarded more than it was inspired, protected from evil more than it was filled with good.

When religion struck into ethics through commands from the divine king, the effect could not fail to be very great. This appeal is very powerful, — God is worthy, God is sovereign, God commands. Its influence reaches far through the ages, as it has a right to do. The system of commands has the great practical advantage of being compact, convenient, and intelligible, and the graces of reverence, humility, and obedience are fostered by it.

I have not time to speak of the abuse of the method, and the injury to ethics and religion at once, that came in through the misjudgments of Pharisaism. Instead, I must follow the method of sovereignty and commandment into Christianity, and trace its influence upon ethics in the world with which we are all familiar

I need not remind my auditors that in the history of Christianity itself the regal idea of God has been extremely influential. In the first place, it is matter of record that Christianity itself very early came to be regarded by many of its adherents as essentially a law, like that of the Old Testament, — a law that differed from the older one mainly in that it was more spiritual in its requirements, and was accompanied by power to get itself obeyed. But in another way the kingly idea of God has found large expression and exerted long influence, namely, through schemes of doctrine that have sovereignty for their centre.

Only see how abundant was the material, in Christian times, for the formation of such a system. Here was the Hebrew idea, rendered permanent by the sacredness of the Hebrew scriptures, of God as reigning in glorious sovereignty over all. Here was the current philo-

sophical idea of God as transcendent, not inhabiting the world, but separate from it and governing it from without. Here was the Christian idea of God as infinitely good, and as entertaining from eternity the thoughts of saving grace toward sinful humanity. And here is the constructional idea, if I may call it so, that a perfect king cannot reign without perfect system, in which everything is planned and decreed beforehand, and comes to pass in complete accordance with the original intention. Ideas so harmonious as these do certainly seem foreordained to come together, bone to his bone, and form a great theory of divine operation, in which all things shall stand forth consistent, straightforward, exceptionless. According to the scheme that is thus suggested, God is so far above that men cannot hope to understand him. God is absolute sovereign, giving account of none of his matters, and under obligation to none of his creatures.

As he must in his perfection, he does all things according to unalterable decrees, held fast by him from all eternity. According to these decrees all things occur. God's sovereign purpose of undeserved saving grace to sinful men is the crowning purpose of them all, and the execution of it conforms perfectly in extent and method to the foreordained form of it in his mind. Men have freedom of action only within narrow limits, if indeed they have it at all, and there is only one thoroughly effective will in the universe, the will of God. And God is altogether good, his will is right and worthy, and whether his work is understood or not, he is to be absolutely trusted as one that has reasons sufficient for all that he brings to pass and all that he requires of men. This doctrine, for substance, is Augustinianism; this doctrine, in its later and riper form, is Calvinism. Straightforward logic is its servitor, and its premises contain the po-

tency and promise of its conclusions. So strong a system could not fail of wide and powerful influence in the world.

I do not present Calvinism in order to attack it or defend it, but only because it offers one of the greatest illustrations of the moral effect of the doctrine of God. Calvinism, or the consistent regal doctrine of God, obtained the firm and unswerving loyalty of a multitude of the best men and women. It was not mere assent, it was loyalty. Honest, conscientious, devoted souls in great numbers accepted this view of God, and took it into heart and life. With them it was no matter of cool opinion; it was absolute, eternal truth. Their own experience confirmed it, too; for they had passed through an agony concerning the destiny of their souls, and had found peace to themselves only when they took God's sovereignty for true, and bowed in absolute submission and self-surrender before him who could justly dispose of them

exactly as he pleased. Who does not see the tremendous ethical power of such a system? The ethics of Calvinism was very simple. God must be absolutely obeyed. In the thoughts of the heart and the deeds of the life, God must be honored, adored, obeyed with absolute submission. No creature has a moment's right to think his own thoughts against the thoughts of God, or do his own will against the will of God. His commands are final, and man's great duty is intelligently to know his will and unquestioningly to do it. Study, O man, to know what God would have thee do, and then put the whole force of thy being into the loyal doing or enduring of his righteous pleasure. He cannot do wrong, and thou canst not do right, save in bowing to his sovereignty.

A noble type of character thus comes into existence. All purity here finds encouragement. Firmness, resoluteness, self-abnegation, surrender, are here glorified.

Intelligence is not repressed. The entire personal force of the soul is wakened up, to fight if need be, but with or without a struggle to give itself away to God. Some graces of character would not seem at home here; yet it would be vain to deny that sooner or later all the Christian graces have grown and thriven, more or less freely, under this influence. In Calvinism God lays his heavy hand upon the judgment, the conscience, and the affections of men, and claims them for himself, and man as a moral being walks as a captive in God's splendid triumph, — cowering sometimes, but often with head erect and heart exultant. Simply because he has bowed to God and owned himself a captive, he can hold his head erect, and be thankful that he is strong to serve his Master. To him it is right that he should be saved, since this is the eternal will of God; and he can most freely and gladly use all his powers in grateful consecration

to the God who has loved him with an everlasting love. Here is the glorification of the kingly. And yet Calvinism, perhaps, has broken as many hearts as it has nerved.

Fresh truths from God do not wait, for their coming into the world, until men know themselves ready to receive them. If they did, they would never come. God sends his fresh truth, and then it has to make its way. Old truth, less advanced and perfect, is already in the field, well known and well established, and the new may be long in finding welcome. It will be considered dangerous at first, because it proposes methods and appeals that the old has not used, and men will long regard with suspicion and dread that higher truth by which God is seeking to do better for them than he has ever done before. Such is the way of humanity. God in his kindness does not wait till men know them-

selves in need of a higher gift. He sends the truth out among them, to win its slow welcome by proving itself divine.

In the part of mankind to which he came, Jesus Christ found the regal idea of God dominant. God, it was thought, was above the world; with the great mass of men he communicated by sending messages through others; and human duty was made known mainly through commandments which had the force of law, and in obedience to which men might find eternal life. I know that these statements need some qualification, for in the religion of the Old Testament God was recognized as present in nature and the events of life, and some men knew the experience of deep spiritual fellowship with him. Yet the general statement is true, that when Jesus appeared, the frame and structure of religion was built on the foundation of regalism and legalism, rather than upon any other.

Jesus Christ found the regal idea of God dominant, and brought, as God's better gift, the paternal idea. It was not unknown before, but he introduced it, in the sense that he gave the living illustration of what it meant, and laid it, in God's name, as the true foundation for the frame and structure of religion. From his time on, the religion that struck in with the keynote of his influence made less of the kingly, and more of the fatherly, in God. This is Christ's doctrine. All turning "back to Christ" means return to the glorious beginnings of the doctrine of divine paternity. In our time the fatherly element is put forward in Christian teaching more than ever, and is winning its way through Christian thought and life as a formative idea. Its movement shows no signs of reversal or retreat.

What is the proper ethical effect of this paternal view of God? What is to be ex-

pected from it in the field of morals? It has shared the fate of higher gifts in general, for it has been welcomed as the surest means of bringing the days of heaven upon the earth, and at the same time viewed with suspicion, and condemned as a doctrine of indifferentism, fatal to all high ethics. The hope and the fear, the welcome and the rejection, are both quite intelligible, but both cannot be justified by the real nature of the doctrine, and both cannot last. What is the state of the case? Which ought to survive? What is the normal effect in the field of ethics of that doctrine of fatherhood and sonship which has been maintained in these lectures, — the doctrine that all men are created sons of God by being created by him in his own likeness, that God's relation and feeling toward men are essentially paternal, but that men need to become full sons to God by loyally acknowledging him as Father, and becoming transformed into the like-

ness of his character? What is such a doctrine of God as this adapted to do for morals?

I would open the answer to this question by noting that the fatherly relation does not by any means exclude the idea of authority, or dispense with the service of commands, which are so convenient and efficacious for the purposes of moral influence. Has not a father authority? In fact, a father is the very one who does possess authority, and possess it by the very nature of the case, without the need of any arbitrary arrangement to invest him with it. A father's authority is natural and ungiven, while a king's is not. God as our Father has a far more intimate and penetrating authority upon us than God regarded as our king. And a father's authority may surely find expression in commands, that represent his will for the children whom he loves. No true paternal

doctrine of God weakens his authority, or stills the voice of his commanding. Nor, on the other side, does the fatherly relation provide any less room for obedience on the children's part. Obedience is the natural correlative to authority, and is most natural where authority is most natural. The normal field for obedience is first the family, and obedience to God our Father takes precedence, in the order of nature, of obedience to God our king. When the fatherly relation is rightly understood, authority and obedience, so far from being discredited, have now for the first time come to their own place and found their permanent standing.

The kingly conception of God has been accompanied by a vivid sense of his opposition to sin. Does the fatherly conception imply less opposition to sin on his part? A thousand times, no. It is often supposed that the regal or judicial relation of God to men implies strict and faithful

hatred of men's evil, while the parental relation stands for softness, indulgence, and comparative moral indifference. But nothing could be more untrue. Who feels the criminal's sin and shame more keenly, — the judge who passes sentence on him, or the parents who gave him life? In human affairs the judicial relation to sin or crime is more visible, external, formal, dramatic, but the parental relation to the sinner or criminal is natural, vital, heart-constraining, and so, when parents are good, the parental hatred and grief at the sinner's sin is terrible, heart-breaking, intolerable. The regal conception of God affords more vivid pictorial views of condemnation, just because it does not go so deep into the heart; but it does not compare with the paternal conception in power to set forth God's essential, unalterable, inexpressible hatred of sin in human beings. Can any one doubt it when the fact is so simple and so natural? God hates human sin,

because it is evil in itself, but he hates it also because it is spoiling his children. It is breaking up his family. It is the one thing that abidingly resists his desire to possess the filial love of his own, and to bring his children up to their destiny. Therefore he desires to deliver his children from it, and acts upon this desire. Accordingly, the paternal relation surpasses all others in the joy and satisfaction over the attainment of goodness that it affords. The delight of good parents in their children's goodness is such delight as is possible nowhere else. If you wish intelligently to conceive of God as rejoicing over the goodness of men who have become good, you must think of him as their Father, loving them as his own, and now glorying in the possession of his own offspring in spiritual fellowship. In the parables of the Master, there was gladness when the woman found her lost money, and when the shepherd found his stray

sheep, but there was deeper joy when the wandering son came home.

In the light of these facts, — the presence in the paternal relation of authority and obedience, and of hatred toward sin and delight in goodness, — we may judge whether this relation implies any less strictness in moral demand on the part of God than the kingly relation. Those who dread the moral effect of the paternal idea dread it mainly on this ground. Children are allowed to have their own way. Nowadays parental restraints are little regarded. Bad youths may be afraid of the law, when their fathers and mothers have little influence over them. To call God a father, it is feared, may be to enthrone indulgent kindness as the ruling motive in his dealings with men; or at least the danger that it may be taken so is greater than any advantage in the fatherly conception. Yet this objection, common though it is among

Christians, is not quite worthy of Christian judgment and feeling. We are not introducing a new idea when we speak of divine paternity. Christ is our authority. We all pray, as he taught us, and teach the little ones to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." When Jesus bade us pray thus, he did not mean that God was a foolish father, without holy aims and family discipline. He was not encouraging us to suppose that God would give us our own way to our own injury, or that we could impose upon him by our wilfulness. God is the one perfect Father, and an ideal father is the very one who has the profoundest motive to be strict and steady in moral requirement. There are good governmental motives to moral strictness, but they do not go so deep as the family motives. Always must a true father require the best from his children, seeing that he desires the best for them. And, as a matter of present fact, solemn and stern

proceedings are perpetually going on between our Father and ourselves, in that invisible realm of spirit-life in which even now we are all living. Upon every one of us is now exerted the stern and unalterable demand of God, who has made us for himself. God's moral sequences, though invisible, are as invariable as his physical, and his moral government, just because it is family government, holds immovably the requirement that we shall be true children to our holy Father. In no other way can we prosper. The inexorable demand of God is upon us, that we be true sons to him. Unless we do this, moral welfare is to us forever impossible. Sonship, let us remember, though we are born to it, is not complete until with our own cooperation we have been delivered from evil and brought to bear our Father's moral likeness. Our Father holds us immovably to this condition, and will make it well with us never, except as his own yearning

heart has its way, and we come to live as loyal children at home with him.

Yet all this holy strictness and wise severity, how different a thing it is in the family from what it is before the throne, where we stand not as children but as subjects! How different when there is a natural relation back of it, from what it is when separated from the heart-constraining bond! Here we touch upon the great ethical advantage of the family relation between God and men, when once it is rightly apprehended. God has toward us the feelings of a father. This great fact is the foundation of the meaning of our life, and the manifold effects of it are far beyond my present power to mention. The marvellous combination of hating the sin and loving the sinner is to us almost an unlearnable spiritual art, but so far as it is learned at all on earth it is mostly learned by parents. But this is to God our Father an unacquired and eternal spir-

itual nature, and the blessing of it is ours. In the family relation all commands are commands of one to whom we are infinitely dear, all strictness is for the sake of our Father's final satisfaction in us, and all severity is severity of love. In the family relation there is opened to us all the fulness of an infinite patience, bearing with our faults until they can be cured, and all the wealth of an infinite helpfulness, and all the warmth of an infinite love. All these unspeakable gifts are freely ours today, and will become fully ours in proportion as we rise to the spiritual completion of our sonship. When we set out for our home in God, we have two great consolations and inspirations. One is, that it truly is our home, and nature even in ourselves is on our side; the other, that we are working with the eternal reality, and shall not work alone.

But I conceive that the crowning effect of the true doctrine of God in the field of

morals is this, — that in the kinship of man with God there is laid an eternal foundation for human ethics. What I am about to say, if I understand it rightly, may be held up in the light either of Christianity or of evolution, and be found equally at home in either atmosphere.

I have already spoken in these lectures of the ideals that have found expression in the unfolding universe as ideals that not only exist, but are perfectly realized, in the mind that conceived the universe. What God has brought forth into being, I have said, has been progressively more and more like himself. Thus his work constantly expresses and represents him. Last and highest of these creations that reveal God is that form of being which we call personality, the fulness and unity of thought, affection, and will. Personality, I have insisted, not only belongs to God, but is perfect in God alone. He is that perfect person, of whose personality ours

is but a "broken light." But now let us remember that personality is a moral form of existence; no, it is the moral form of existence. To all personal being corresponds morality. There can be no ethics where there are not persons, and there can be no persons without ethics accompanying their life. And so God's personality is an ethical personality as well as man's, and God has character. But if the ideal and perfect personality exists in God, the ideal and perfect character must exist there also. If he is the ideal person, he must have the ideal character, or the character in which personality must find its perfection. It cannot be otherwise than that the ideal and perfect person bears the character in which alone personality can be perfected. Since God is the ideal person, God must be the ideal of goodness for all persons. There can be no personality, ever or anywhere, that does not have for its ideal of character that goodness

which is existing in the ideal person, who is God.

This is a great truth, if it is a truth at all. It means that for God and men, and for all spirits whatever, the moral world is one. The nature of ethics is everywhere the same, good and evil are universal in their sweep and unalterable in their nature, and there is one moral standard for all. The character that is borne by God is the ethical ideal for God, and for us men, and for all spirits that ever existed or may exist. The source and fount of existence is morally good, and is such as all spirits ought to be. The true ethics for men, therefore, is eternally grounded and sure. The good is likeness to God. This is the final word, for God is unalterable, and is the ideal for all personal and moral existence. No true word can ever be spoken, in any world, that represents the good as consisting in anything else than moral likeness to God. The mani-

festation of that standard is the progressive work of him in whom it exists, and conformity to that standard is the one hope of men.

The doctrine of the family relation between God and men is simply the practical and inspiring expression of this sublime and all-harmonizing ethical reality. God is the moral standard. The character of the Father is the standard for the family. What does that mean to me? I am a young, weak, and unformed moral being, embarrassed by ignorance, restrained by sin, incapable as yet of doing justice in my life to any high ideal of morality. But I have at least learned what family I have been born into, and in what atmosphere it is my privilege to be growing up. There is in existence a perfect moral standard; and that standard is my Father's standard, and therefore mine. The kinship that I bear to God makes God's ethics my ethics too, by inalienable right, and

gives me assurance that I am on the right and hopeful road when I am rising toward my best and worthiest. I do not know all that is in my Father, but I know that my best is most like to him. In his family the purest, truest, sweetest human is the sure foreshining of the divine. Since I am of God's family, moral obligation is a part of my being, goodness is my birthright, which I have but to claim, and the worthiest that I can learn is most akin to my eternal ideal which exists in God my Father.

This, I confess, is worth much to me, for here I have found what many are seeking. Students in ethics have searched through the discoverable stock of infantile human experiences, seeking for the primal sources of the moral sense. How in the early stages of humanity the moral sense grew up, and the idea of obligation was developed, they have sought to ascertain by analysis and guessing and the piecing

of facts together. The search is legitimate, and the course of the incipient moral sense and judgment may to a great extent be traced. Means of development and occasions of direction-taking may be found, and the ethical history of early man may in great measure be brought to light. But the inner cause of the moral sense is not to be tracked out by exploring the infantile social relations of primitive man. The primal cause of the moral sense lies in the fact that man bears the likeness of God. From his earliest human moments, man was akin to the infinite source and ideal of moral perfection, and it was his nature to feel like a child of the perfect One, beginning afar off to grope after likeness to his Father. From the first hours of his personality the ethical belonged to his nature and his life, and his ultimate moral standard was just where it is now and will be forever, in the character of the perfect God. So the foundation of ethics is eter-

nal, and the standard in morals is unalterable; and that standard, though not fully discerned by any of us, is growing clearer, and our right to claim it as our own is growing more certain to us, with every forward step in ethical attainment. The moral effect of the doctrine of God, thus presented, is the eternal grounding of morals for man, and the directing of human ethics to the perfect and unchangeable ideal. This is the noblest service to ethics that could possibly be rendered.

In these lectures I have endeavored to show that we cannot refuse to believe in God as intelligent and as good, without stultifying our own intellectual and moral processes; that God, regarded as intelligent and good, is personal, in an intelligible sense; that the relation between God and men is the relation between a father and his children, — children, however, who may not know their father, and who need

to advance to the completion of their sonship through holy fellowship with God; and that this conception of God and his relation to men is favorable, not unfavorable, to sound and strong ethics in the world.

My reason for presenting these views has resided in my strong conviction that the idea of a living and personal God is equally at home in science, in philosophy, and in religion; and that from whichever of these fields this idea approaches us, the true and well-supported conception of God is the paternal conception. Moreover, I perceive that through the joint influence of Christianity and modern knowledge this paternal conception of God and his relation to men is now coming to its place in religion and theology, never again to retire. The doctrine of divine Fatherhood has come, and has come to stay. Doubtless it is a doctrine that is easily misunderstood and easily misused. But I am well convinced that it is the doctrine

of Jesus Christ and of all permanent Christianity, and that at the same time it is in genuine harmony with the characteristic knowledge and thinking of the present age. It is not destined to be displaced by an advance in religion, or by an advance in science, or by an advance in philosophy, or by an advance in ethics. There is no advance beyond it. It is the true doctrine, and will remain. It has not yet had the opportunity to show what type of character it will bring forth in men who are fearlessly taught it from their youth, and live all their days in its atmosphere. But it is adapted to produce the very noblest moral fruit; and before it has had even half as much time as has been given to the kingly doctrine of God to show of what ethical power it is, it will vindicate itself by disappointing fears and more than fulfilling hopes, and training godlike character.

I have desired to be helpful in clarifying and thereby commending this most

solid and beneficent doctrine, and therefore I have framed these lectures. At the end of our quest, however, rises the question, how far a doctrine is necessarily a power. It looks, when once one gets a vision of the truth, as if a clear and spiritual doctrine of God ought fairly to sweep the field in ethics, and transform us promptly into faithful children of our holy Father. But it does not always turn out in that manner. Good doctrines of ethics are often taught, but they do not always make good men of students, or of teachers either. Even this high doctrine of the living, personal, and paternal God, of the naturalness of religion, of the unity of human ethics with divine, and of the everlasting validity of morals, may, like any other doctrine, be a word of breath but not of power. No opinion studied out is necessarily influential in transforming character, — not even a noble opinion about God and our normal life with him.

What we need is not merely the moral influence of the doctrine of God; it is the moral influence of God. We want the relation to be realized in life, and the gracious moral effect of the sonship to be brought forth in fact. The proper intermediary, or connecting link, between a true conception of God and the moral power that corresponds thereto is religion, the actual personal life of man in conscious relation to the God in whom he believes. When one has a right conception of God the Father, gracious and holy, exacting, inspiring, and transforming, the next thing is to take him as Father, and let the relation do its transforming work. Let this never be forgotten. We may light-heartedly boast that God is our Father, and be ready to go our way in shallow peace; but the question, "What kind of son are you to him, then?" ought to recall us to our senses. That is always a fair question. One who claims God as Father, thereby

admits his duty to be toward God a loyal son, and ought to be living up to that duty. It is through the practice and experience of loyal sonship that the moral influence of the paternal doctrine of God is to become effective upon us. Living at home with the holy God as sons, we shall receive the benefit of his transforming power.

So it is well to proclaim the divine Fatherhood in its fulness and its searching power, and make it as plain and impressive as we can, and keep it year after year before the people; not merely in order that men may think correctly about it, but in the hope that they may at length take it for true, and claim their filial place. We want to lead God's sons up into possession of their full spiritual sonship. We would gladly bring them out of their sin and ignorance and alienation, home to their glory. We want all filial acts of all sorts to be performed and to become habitual, one if

not another, of this kind if not of that; we will be thankful for all acts and for any, in which men conduct themselves in the spirit of sons to God. We desire to see the human sonship completed in every soul that God has made, through holy, loyal fellowship with the Father. It is well, therefore, to be telling men of the relation that we desire to see fulfilled. As for those who fear the doctrine lest it weaken morals and religion, and those who welcome it as a doctrine of ease and lazy hope, both classes misunderstand it, and we must help them to see it as it is. In all such endeavor we are laboring together with God, who desires his children to know their relation to him, in order that they may humbly enter into it in its fulness and grow up to their proper destiny there. The mightiest moral force in the world is God himself, working for the fulfilment of his own gracious counsel for his human family.

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